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OF FAITH HEALING

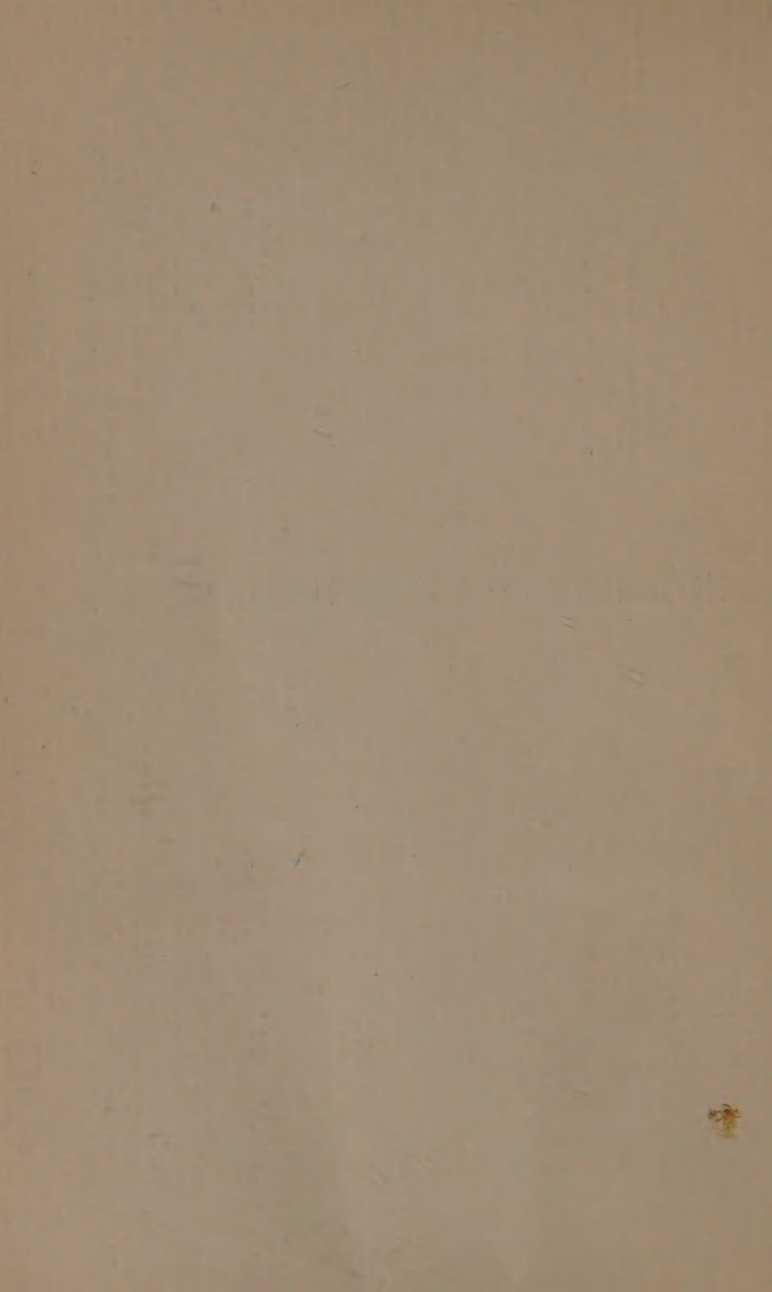


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A STUDY OF FAITH HEALING.



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A STUDY

OF

FAITH HEALING

BY

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FAITH-HEALING



CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS MEANT BY FAITH-HEALING.

IN the present day we are constantly meeting, either in the newspapers or in conversation, with the phrase 'faith-healing,' used to describe certain physical phenomena produced at meetings convened for this special purpose. Faith-healing applied to spiritual things is fully accepted by all Christians. That change of heart, soul, and life which occurs when a man's will is thus surrendered to God, when he trusts in the saving merits of Christ's work, and when he receives God's Holy Spirit, is as evidently a Divine work, as plainly superhuman, and as different in kind and in results from all merely moral reform as raising the dead. Indeed, it is to this it is likened in Holy Writ. A little book, entitled *Modern Miracles*, so fully recognises this that it is entirely occupied with detailing the spiritual fulfilment of our Lord's word when in the synagogue at Nazareth He read: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He

hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' And these are miracles indeed!

In speaking, however, of 'faith-healing' here, we set aside altogether its common and obvious reference to the soul, and speak only of the cure of bodily diseases as the direct result of special believing prayer, with or without faith, or even Christianity, in the person cured, and with or without the anointing of oil, and the laying on of hands. Such healing is by no means difficult to hear of in the present day, and there are increasing numbers of the 'healed' who are ready to testify to their cure, and who firmly believe they have been healed by faith alone.

Now we may say, at the outset, that our only object is in a truly reverent and Christian spirit to inquire into the real meaning of this oft-used phrase, to examine carefully into the genuineness and character of such of these cures as we have met with or heard of; and, finally, to consider broadly the whole question of the miraculous action of God in physical matters in the present day, and specially with regard to the healing of diseases. And that it is high time to make such inquiry is obvious when we consider the tendency of faith to rest on visible signs from the days of the Apostles downwards; and the danger to the Christian Church if signs, not actually due to Divine miraculous power, are set forth as such; the evil of which is not the less because this is done in

good faith. It must also be remembered that miracles, even if true, are not Christianity, but only signs and tokens of it. Christianity is, therefore, never to be tested by their frequency. As soon as they begin to be relied on, or confidently looked for, they become real hindrances to faith. It has been well said that 'when the world that ought to be repenting is taken up with staring, the sobriety of faith is lost in the gospel of credulity.'

This state of things, even in the Apostolic times, began to get such possession of men's minds that it had to be strongly spoken against (see 1 Cor. xii-xiv).

There are ever the two dangers of formalism and fanaticism. On the one hand, there may be an orderly routine of powerless church services, under which religion may gradually become a mere affair of the understanding, and often not even of that; or we may have religious thought chained and paralyzed by science, which would even seek to bind the Creator in the fetters of His own laws. On the other hand, there sometimes is a fanaticism that takes a positive pride in believing in things that are really incredible; a show of miracles and signs, with many extravagances and exaggerations, and consequent excess and licence, that bring discredit on Christianity. As one result all supernatural manifestations are brought into disrepute, and the pendulum slowly returns back to formalism and scepticism. Between these two kinds of excess the Church is always swinging, such is the unsteadiness of our poor humanity; and he is happiest and wisest who can best preserve the golden mean.

With regard to faith-healing, it is undoubtedly a very serious thing to attach God's name to anything human, and very disastrous indeed are the effects on the waverers and the doubters when it is done wrongly or carelessly. The easy way, for instance, in everyday life in which 'the Lord's will' is constantly assumed to be the cause of disasters due to our own carelessness, is a very real evil and a very common one, and not only partakes of unconscious blasphemy, but is a complete hindrance to the judgment of the real source of the trouble—one's self. In the same way it is undoubtedly the case that, whether they be true or false, the loose and somewhat flippant and irreverent way in which 'faith-cures' and 'faith-healing' are spoken about must greatly stumble the minds of many honest Christians.

We do not propose in these chapters to inquire at any length into the scriptural grounds on which the popular conception of 'faith-healing' rests, and how far the celebrated passage in James can be used and acted on at the present day.

We believe fully not only in prayer for spiritual but for material blessings—not only for healing of soul, but of body. We believe, also, that the God who rules over the universe, and whose are all its laws, can control, modify, or suspend these at pleasure; but we also believe it to be clearly established that when natural means will effect the required result, He does not employ supernatural.

We must, however, guard against a common error which starts with the theory that the Christian man

or woman has no right ever to be ill at all, and that all sickness and disease in them is a direct result of want of faith. This doctrine was enforced the other day in a large London church in these words (addressed to children!): 'Our mortal body has been quickened and healed. Christ bore our sicknesses. If we yield ourselves up to Him—however full of disease, it matters not—His Spirit quickens our mortal bodies. Let us then cry, "God be merciful to me, *a sick one!*"' When once a man is filled with the Spirit, all disease flies.' Another teacher of this doctrine writes: 'The great fact that Jesus Christ has borne our sicknesses and pains on the cross needs to be brought out in its full meaning. Our members ought not to be held bound by sickness. Our spirit ought not to be exposed to the oppression which sickness brings with it; our movements must be free.'

A doctrine so monstrous as this only needs to be stated to carry its own refutation to every mind, were it not that it is sought to be supported by the statement that Christ bore our bodily sicknesses in the same way and in the same sense that He bore our sins, while He was on the cross,—Matthew viii. 17 being quoted to prove this: 'Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.'

Such a doctrine takes away all blessing and comfort from the Christian's sick-bed, and brands the sufferer with unbelief. It makes all sickness to be the result of want of faith, and condemns a person for being ill just as much as for sinning. That it is the reverse of the application of the sentence from Isaiah by the

writer of the Gospel is self-evident when we consider that St. Matthew expressly says that this prophecy was fulfilled there and then, in our Lord's lifetime,—not in His death. There is no reference to any atonement for these sicknesses, which is a most unscriptural and incongruous idea. We find the fulfilment of these words in His perfect human sympathy with every sufferer He healed. The same passage (Isaiah liii. 4) is quoted by St. Peter (1 Peter ii. 24) in its direct application to sin, not a word being there said about sickness. The two texts show that Christ bore our sicknesses and sufferings in His lifetime, our sins in His death.

While absolutely refusing then this theory of all suffering being simply due to want of faith, which we regret to know has been firmly engrafted in some cases on 'faith-healing,' we fully believe that many of the cures effected are in answer to prayer. This may perhaps surprise some who are inclined to pooh-pooh the whole thing, and who have not personally inquired into the matter. God will and does answer every prayer truly offered to Him by every contrite heart; what we, however, too often forget is that 'No' is no less an answer than 'Yes'; and if it is more for our good and His glory, it is the answer we shall get. But, even when it is 'Yes,' we must carefully guard against the idea that this necessarily involves a direct miracle. In a sense, every blessing we receive, every answer to prayer we get, in soul as in body, may be said to be miraculous in that it comes from God. But in the sense in which the word is used in connection with

faith-healing, it means nothing less than direct supernatural interference with the laws of Nature.

Let it at once be understood that this is no inquiry into the limits of God's power, no investigation into what He can or cannot do. We, as Christians, know that omnipotence is bounded by no natural laws. God is sovereign over all men and all things, and does what He *pleases*. And it is *this* which is the subject of our inquiry: to find out, not what He *can* do, but what He does.

It is remarkable and interesting to notice at the outset the close connection between God's actions and believing prayer, first of all in the Scriptures, and secondly in daily experience. It is this connection that gives rise to the expression, 'faith-healing.' It is not, however, faith that heals, but God; and it is His restoring power that is often manifestly displayed in answer to believing prayer. This is clearly shown in Scripture in the well-known passage in James, and not less so in Christian experiences of all ages.

CHAPTER II.

THE HISTORY OF FAITH-HEALING.

THE following summary of the historical evidence of faith-healing will suffice to show that the practice and belief, so far from being modern, are as old as Christianity itself.

During the first three centuries there is frequent mention of miraculous healing. This fact is admitted by all, although it is no longer possible to sit in judgment on particular cases. There has been much debate as to the period when the miraculous gifts of the Apostolic age ceased to operate. By some it has been maintained that they continued at least into the third century. This question lies somewhat apart from our subject, though related to it. As representative of the controversy in earlier stages, the opinion of the eminent Dr. Jortin may be quoted¹ :— ‘The Christian miracles,’ he says, ‘may be referred to four periods. The first period contains those which are recorded in the New Testament, and reaches to

¹ *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History.* 1752. Vol. ii.

about A.D. 70. Of these there can be no doubt among Christians. The next period may be of thirty-seven years, and ends about A.D. 107. There is reason to think it probable that some miracles were then performed by those who preached and planted the Gospel in pagan countries. The third reaches from thence to Constantine. For some of the miracles in these ages, in the second and third centuries, so much may be alleged as should restrain us from determining too positively against them, and denying them all. The last period is from Constantine to where you please, and abounds with miracles, the defence of which shall be left to those who are inclined to undertake it, at the hazard of misapplying their pains.'

A friend, who has spent two years in the British Museum turning up the original authorities on this subject, tells me that from the third century to Gregory the Great (540-604) we still get scattered cases of healing. Such are recorded in the fourth century by Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Augustine; in the fifth by Hilary and Jerome; in the sixth by Gregory the Great, Augustine of Canterbury, and by Cyril. From Gregory to the Reformation Protestants are agreed as to the cessation of miracles. Indeed, this was the midst of the dark ages, when more trust was placed in dead bones and relics than in the living God, and many cures, very possibly real, but rightly called 'false miracles,' were wrought by these means.

One well-authenticated case is associated with

Catherine of Siena, and there are cures ascribed to Bede and Cuthbert. Catherine, indeed, a simple woman of the people, seems to have been another Dorothea Trüdel. On one occasion in 1373 the plague broke out at Siena, and the director of the hospital, Father Matthew, was stricken down. Lenso, his physician, had but a faint hope of his living, his blood was too much poisoned. Catherine had heard of his illness, and when she entered the room the dying man tried to sit up. Catherine retired, but a friend followed and asked her not to allow the good man to die. 'Am I like God,' she said, 'to deliver a man from death?' But, believing she would obtain from God what she asked in faith, she bowed her head a while, and then, her countenance radiant with joy, said, 'Well, let us take courage, he will not die this time,' and she passed on. In an hour, Father Matthew was seated at table eating, and soon recovered.

As the light of the Reformation began to dawn, a return to simple faith in God for bodily cure was manifested amongst the Waldenses and Moravians. We find many instances of anointing with oil, and prayer, with cures following. It is said of Count Zinzendorf that when, for example, a brother was cured of disease, even of the worst kind, by a single word or by sincere prayer, he viewed this as a very simple matter, 'calling to mind even that saying of Scripture, that signs were not for those who believed, but for those who believed not.'

We will give one or two instances of cure, although

unfortunately in most cases we can only guess at the disease¹.

The story of Luther and Melanchthon is well known. Melanchthon was taken very ill on a journey, and despatched a messenger to fetch Luther. Luther arrived, and found Philip about to give up the ghost. His eyes were set ; his consciousness was almost gone ; his speech had failed, and also his hearing ; his face had fallen ; he knew no one, and had ceased to take either solids or liquids. At this juncture Luther was filled with the utmost consternation, and turning to his fellow-travellers, said : ‘ Blessed Lord, how has the devil spoiled me of this instrument ! ’ Then turning away towards the window he called most earnestly on God. He besought God to forbear, saying he had ceased work to urge upon Him in supplication, with all the promises he could repeat from Scripture, that He must hear, and answer now if He would ever have the petitioner trust in Him again. This vehemence, if the record be exact, seems to have a spice of self-will in it. Then, taking the hand of Philip, and well knowing what was the anxiety of his heart and conscience, Luther said, ‘ Be of good courage, Philip, thou shalt not die. Though God wanted not good reason to slay thee, yet He willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he may be converted and live. Wherefore give not place to the spirit of grief, nor become the slayer of thyself, but trust in the Lord, who is able to kill and to make alive.’ While he uttered

¹ Some facts in this chapter have been taken from Dr. Gordon’s *Ministry of Healing*.

these things Philip began, as it were, to revive and to breathe, and, gradually recovering his strength, was at last restored to health. Of this occurrence Luther says : ' I found him dead, but, by an evident miracle of God, he lives.' At this very time we must remember Luther had the greatest contempt for the miracles of the Roman Catholic Church.

Another case of Luther's was still more remarkable. Myconius, the superintendent of Gotha, was in the last stage of 'consumption,' and already speechless. Luther wrote to him that he must not die : ' May God not let me hear, so long as I live, that you are dead, but cause you to survive me. I pray this earnestly and will have it granted. Amen.' ' I was so horrified,' said Myconius afterwards, ' when I read what the good man had written, that it seemed to me as though I had heard Christ say : " Lazarus, come forth." ' And from that time Myconius was, as it were, kept from the grave by the power of Luther's prayers, and did not die till after Luther's death. Here Luther's own strong will, to a great extent, becomes an agent in the cures.

From the time of Luther a continuous chain of faith-healing can be traced, with no interval of more than twenty years, down to the present day. In the sixteenth century, there are instances recorded by Bishop Parkhurst, D'Aubigné, and others. In the seventeenth there were cases amongst the Baptists, who anointed the sick constantly throughout Wales, the Presbyterians, the Quakers, and Puritans ; in the eighteenth century, cures amongst the Huguenots, and

others are recorded in the various Methodist magazines. One or two miscellaneous instances may be given.

One of the Scottish Covenanters, an earnest man named John Welch, prayed over the body of a young man, who, after a long wasting sickness, 'had closed his eyes and expired (apparently) to the apprehension of all spectators' for no less than forty-eight consecutive hours, and when at last the friends wished to bury the 'cold dead' body, he begged for one hour more, and at the end of that time he called his friends, and showed them the young man 'restored to life' again, as it was said, to their great astonishment.

Among the early Methodists the case of Ann Mather, daughter of Joseph Benson, the Methodist commentator, is well known. For upwards of twelve months she had had no use whatever of her limbs, and was totally helpless. After evening prayer on October 4, which was conducted with great earnestness by Mr. Benson, Ann rose up and said, 'I can walk—I feel I can,' and proceeded three times across the room.

These stories might be multiplied to any extent. We will, however, only give two more from missionary sources.

At a Rhenish mission station in South Africa in 1858, an earnest native Christian saw an old friend who had become lame in both legs. Impressed with a peculiar sense of believing confidence, he went into the bushes to pray, and then came straight up to the cripple, and said: 'The same Jesus who made the

lame to walk can do so still. I say to thee, In the name of Jesus, rise and walk!’ The lame man, with kindred faith, raised himself on his staff and ‘walked, to the astonishment of all who knew him.’ The other story is that, ‘on one occasion, a heathen mixed a deadly poison with the missionary’s rice, which he ate, but, instead of falling down dead, he experienced no inconvenience. The man, by this proof of God’s power, became convinced of the truth, and was eventually converted, but not until his conscience had compelled him to confess to the missionary his guilt.’ This incident occurred in Sumatra, and is well attested, and the missionary (Nommensen) was alive in 1873.

Before commenting on these cases, let us continue our review into still more modern times.

On the Continent, in England, and America, faith-healing under different names is in active progress. Pastor Blumhardt, of Boll, one of those best known on the Continent in connection with faith-healing, commenced his special labours in 1841, with a case of supposed demoniacal possession. The symptoms were most extraordinary. The doctor was perfectly at a loss in the case. He said, ‘Is there no clergyman in this village who can pray? I can do nothing here.’ The minister of the village was Blumhardt. He felt the reproach, went to the house, and after most earnest prayer, being sure that demoniacal power was at work, and moved by an impulse which he believed to be from above, he called the woman by name, and said: ‘We have seen what the devil does; we

will now see what the Lord Jesus can do. Oh, pray, Lord Jesus help me! In the same moment,' he adds, 'everything was, as it were, blown away; she said the words after me, sat up and remained for five hours, which had never been the case before, awake and cool, nay more, cheerful and intelligent. The case lasted two years before the patient was quite restored.'

Fasting, prayer, and the imposition of hands were the only means used. He placed no stress on this last, and afterwards seems to have abandoned it. He generally used only a few words in prayer, and for the most part only sighed in stillness, 'because,' said he, 'I did not know what and how to pray. I satisfied myself with firm confidence, with the simple offering of earnest prayer to the Lord.' The recovered patient, whose name was Gottlieben Dittus, afterwards entered his service, and married later on and had three sons, and eventually died after an illness of two years, full of faith.

From this time Blumhardt had many cases brought to him for cure. 'A married couple, whose child suffered much from disease in the eyes, were undecided what to do. The doctor whom they consulted declared an operation to be indispensably necessary. Shrinking from this, they went to ask their former pastor, Dr. Barth, if they should have the operation done. Dr. Barth sent them to Blumhardt, and in three days the eyes were well.' Of his patients Blumhardt says: 'I converse in the most unconstrained manner, often apparently lightly, about their affairs, but in secret direct my eye and prayer to the

Lord. I never pray with themselves. I never lay my hands upon them. Some go away so benefited that they do not return, but I hear good account of them; others come again and again with benefit till they are quite recovered. In many cases there is no result.'

Dorothea Trüdel was another well-known worker in the same field. She began by finding four poor sick people getting worse and worse, though under medical care, till at last their cases so pressed on her mind that, she says, 'I went as a woman to the Lord, and laid our distress before Him. I told Him how willingly I would send for an elder, as is commanded in James v, but, as there was not one, I must go to my sick ones in the faith of the Canaanitish woman, and, without trusting to any virtue in my hand, I would lay it upon them. I did so, and, by the Lord's blessing, all four recovered.' She dealt always with the soul first, then prayed for the body, laying hands on the sick and anointing them in the name of the Lord with oil. 'Extraordinary cures' often followed, in many cases quite suddenly. Night and day she toiled, nursing the sick, and praying for them without any payment. Hundreds of eminent men in Switzerland and Germany went to examine the cases, and all bore witness to the marvellous cures she was the means of working simply by the prayer of faith. She never promised a cure to any one, but she never called any sickness incurable. She thought little of the cures of the body in comparison with the spiritual cures which God wrought by her instrumentality.

After a time she got a dear friend, Professor Zeller, brother-in-law of Bishop Gobat, of Jerusalem, to help her, and when she died, in 1862, he became her successor, and has carried on the home ever since.

Anxious to see how the work was progressing after a lapse of twenty-seven years, and being in the neighbourhood of Zürich in the summer of 1889, I thought a brief account of the institution at Mannëdorf would be of some value in connection with our subject.

We sailed down the lake on a lovely sunny morning, to the bright little village that lies about half-way down on the left bank.

As we drew near to Mannëdorf, I asked the captain if he could direct me to the establishment of the 'faith-cure.' He at once pointed out a cluster of some dozen houses in the centre of the village, where he said some four hundred sick people of all sorts were collected. Of Dorothea Trüdel he had never heard, and of the cures he did not seem inclined to hazard any opinion, good or bad.

Passing out of the little village street into the garden of the institution, I heard the great bell sounding for the twelve o'clock dinner. Up the steps of a large building in front of me were streaming crowds of quiet, happy-looking people, mostly middle-aged women.

Herr Zeller, the present governor of the institution, came out to greet me, and invited me to share the noonday meal. I was a perfect stranger, and had

no introduction, save that afforded by our common Christianity. This was, however, enough to give me the *entrée* to his house and hospitality. Following the crowd, I entered a large hall filled with long tables, where about two hundred people could dine at once. The places were soon filled, I being placed near the head of one table, which was filled entirely with women; for the most part apparently in fairly good health, and belonging mainly to the lower middle class. An earnest blessing having been asked by Herr Zeller on the food, the plain but substantial meal was commenced. During its progress I had plenty of time for observation.

The only decoration of the room consisted in a number of appropriate texts, such as 'Jesus set Himself at table with them,' 'Submit yourself under the mighty hand of God,' &c. Next to me sat an intelligent woman from Alsace, from whom I learnt a good deal. She told me that those who dined here were patients who paid a small sum for their board and lodging, or friends who often came in the summer months for the sake of the Christian intercourse and quiet and rest afforded in this peaceful spot.

There was another dining-place for some of the very poor, whilst a number of the patients, being mental cases, were unfit to leave their houses; others again were ill in bed. She thought the total number at present was nothing like four hundred, but between two and three hundred. The greater part of the people in the room, she said, were suffering from

some disease or other. One she pointed out had been there four months, and was no better but rather worse. She herself was suffering from an affection of the heart, and did not seem possessed with any very lively faith, but to have come principally for quiet and rest from the bustling town life she lived in Alsace. She said many people had been cured there, yet did not seem to have any special cases to relate; but pointed out with great pride one or two who had been Dorothea Trüdel's helpers.

After dinner Herr Zeller took possession of me and carried me off to his private room, more particularly to learn the object of my visit. He is a stout man apparently about fifty years of age, with a broad pleasant face, characterised by such an earnest look in his eyes, as at once showed the character of the man. He has had entire charge of the institution since Dorothea Trüdel died in 1862. His manner is kind and genial, and combined with sufficient decision and authority to enable him well to rule the peaceful community of which he is the head. He is undoubtedly a simple, earnest Christian, a man of great faith and earnest prayer; a man of broad and kindly sympathy, and at the same time of judgment and common sense.

I told him of the position of 'faith-healing' in this country, and that I was anxious to hear from himself the exact present position of the institution at Mannëdorf.

The following is the substance of our conversation. He vigorously repudiated all idea of 'faith-healing'

as understood by many in this country; that is, of meetings for people to be healed there and then, any failure being of course attributed to their want of faith. This procedure would indeed be contrary to the spirit of this institution, which may be rather described as a reverent belief in the power of prayer and the love of God. 'We are but children,' said Herr Zeller, 'and, however foolish we may appear to the outside world, we are obliged to obey the command of our Heavenly Father and pray for any that are sick. The result we must leave with Him. In some cases it is immediate, in others slow, in others there is no change. We make no promises, we give no guarantees, we do not blame for want of faith. We have two meetings daily, when, in addition to our simple service, earnest prayer is made not only for every inmate of this institution, but for those who write to us to pray for them from every part of the world. And God does give us wonderful answers and fills our hearts with joy and our mouths with praise.' He strongly repudiated the whole system of doctrine we have alluded to in our first chapter, and the idea that sickness in God's people is the result of unbelief.

On inquiry as to the nature of the diseases cured here, I found Herr Zeller could recollect no cases of blind, deaf, or dumb cured, or of the swollen neck called *gottre*, so common in Switzerland. All sorts of nervous diseases and hysterias, and aches and pains of every description, are cured in abundance, and in addition Herr Zeller mentioned that consump-

tion, pneumonia, gout, and asthma had all been cured. He spoke of a gentleman now in Syria who had been cured years ago of cancer of the lip. He told of opium-eaters cured, of bone disease, of eczema and other skin diseases, and of certain tumours. He himself was cured of eczema by Dorothea Trüdel, and this led to his taking up the work. He has found many mental cases relieved, but no cures of idiots.

He does not limit his beneficial work to Christians, but prays for all who ask for prayer even through their friends. For instance, a certain merchant and unbeliever was old and supposed to be dying, and for him prayers were asked. These resulted in a cure, and the man became a Christian. He does not even require that the ordinary medical man be dismissed, but is quite willing to pray even for those who have a doctor. His whole position, indeed, is a marked contrast to what is largely taught in England, to which we shall further allude in subsequent chapters.

On leaving the establishment, deeply impressed with its genial and unfeigned Christianity, I called on all the neighbouring doctors to see if I could get news of any organic cures wrought by Herr Zeller, that is, cures not of nerves or mind, but of actual bodily affection, such as dropsy, heart or lung disease, malformations, but excluding paralysis and all nervous affections. I could not, however, meet with one case to which they could, or would, testify, but they had no doubt that numbers were cured of nerve and mind troubles, and that still more were partly relieved; which they attributed to the quiet and rest, and

general atmosphere of faith and hope with which all are surrounded at Mannëdorf.

There can be no doubt that the institution is a great centre of cure, of earnest, believing prayer and simple childlike faith, and largely free from the extravagance that so disfigures much that is called 'faith-healing' in this country. At the same time it seems undeniable that the bulk, at any rate, of the cases benefited are clearly mental, nervous, and hysterical. With regard to the rest, those presumably organic, that occur in the list of the healed here, such as consumption, pneumonia, gout, cancer, liver disease, &c., I unfortunately was not able to verify any single case. The patient and the pastor undoubtedly believe in these cures as well as in those of nervous origin, and curiously enough see nothing more wonderful in them; whereas, as we hope to show, they stand on a different platform altogether. Bearing in mind that some, at any rate, of the organic cases, such as pneumonia, may recover of themselves with nothing but rest and nursing, we would ask the reader to suspend his judgment on the other cures—as also on those handed down from earlier ages—until he hears the result of inquiry into similar cases capable of verification in England.

CHAPTER III.

INSTANCES OF FAITH-HEALING SO-CALLED.

TURNING our attention now to faith-healing in England in the present day, we are at once struck by its extreme activity and by the enormous number of its cures. There are, we believe, comparatively few people in London who have not known or heard of some person being cured by this means.

The other day we came across a circular printed in 1885, presumably for the great conference on faith-healing held in that year, and headed, 'A summary of 155 testimonies given to Divine Healing by simple faith in Jesus, during twelve months ending March 1, 1884.' We observe it is a summary of 155 *testimonies*, not of 155 *cures*. It is not stated that the people were healed, but that they *said they were*; an important and judicious distinction. Still, when we consult the list of diseases, even with this reservation, it fills us with astonishment. It includes the following cases: 5 consumption, 1 diseased hip, 5 abscess, 3 dyspepsia, 4 internal complaint, 2 throat ulcer, 7

nervous debility, 9 rheumatism and neuralgia, 5 diseased heart, 2 withered hand and arm, 4 bronchitis, 3 cancer, 2 paralyzed arm, 3 weak eyes, 1 ruptured spine (?), 5 pains in the head. In addition to the 155 there are 94 more restored to health, diseases not classified; so that we reach the respectable total of some 250 at this one centre, which has continued its work of faith-cure with increasing activity ever since.

The healing detailed in this circular is conducted at different services on Sundays and weekdays, held in a large stone chapel situated in the midst of a densely populated and poor neighbourhood in the North-East of London. After the Sunday-school, for instance—in the teaching of which the healing of the body is a prominent theme—those who have been healed are invited to rise, and perhaps some twenty or thirty stand up. Then those who wish for healing step forward to what in a church would be the altar steps, and kneel with bare heads.

Certain deaconesses then lay their hands on them during prayer; and then the officiating minister anoints each patient on the head with oil, praying specially for them one by one. He never knows the particular ailment at the time, but requires implicit faith from the patient, and entire 'surrender of body, soul, and spirit to God,' otherwise no cure is effected. If the patient is healed there and then, he may testify of it. If not, the ceremony is over, but the patient can return and be re-anointed, if he wishes, at any other time. Any failure of cure is, of

course, said to be due to 'lack of faith' or 'surrender' on the part of the sick one.

And in this, be it remarked, lies a fundamental difference between this system and that of Blumhardt and Dorothea Trüdel. They pray in faith, but know not whether it be God's will to heal or no. All is left with Him to do as He pleases. All they do is to ask. Here, on the contrary, cure is promised on the condition of perfect faith—'If thou canst believe.' They *know* it is God's will none should be ill! All sickness is the fruit of unbelief! If you are not cured, it is your fault.

This extraordinary teaching, founded on the eighth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, has already been touched on in our first chapter. The doctrine itself, when fully known, appears self-condemned to sober minds. It is, however, very widely spread.

In June, 1885, a great conference on faith-healing was held at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, mainly attended by adherents to this creed; and at one meeting, in the presence of 2000 people, no less than 250 were anointed for various diseases. Though the larger homes for faith-cure abroad, such as those at Boll and Mannëdorf, repudiate this teaching, and are hence looked on as old-fashioned by its followers, the greater number of 'faith-healing' homes accept it. Of these there are said to be half-a-dozen in England, with some 120 additional smaller centres of healing in the United Kingdom. In America there are said to be about thirty homes (one of which cost over £6000, presented by a cured patient), with un-

numbered smaller centres. There are several in Australia, and in nearly every country there are known faith-healers. A few years ago in New York and Boston you could hardly find a person who believed in faith-healing ; now there are thousands. It is deeply to be regretted that the delusion, which makes sickness to be sinfulness (for unbelief is sin), should be connected with so wide a movement.

The matter is of such importance that we will place a few of the utterances on the doctrine made at the conference before our readers. The speakers put the cure of the body on *exactly* the same ground as the salvation of the soul. The believer 'has the right to claim from God his cure' (!), exactly as in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ he asks pardon for his sins. 'I do not believe my Father desires me to suffer,' says one ; 'but I know Satan does.' 'In praying to God for you we do not ask Him to cure you *if* it be His will, but *because* He has shown us it is His will !' 'I know,' says one, 'many people who have been cured (?) for three or four years, but who still wait its manifestation !' Those who do not believe the gospel of cure are taxed with only preaching 'half the gospel.'

How well and temperately Pastor Godet says of these delusions:—'This theory presents a threefold danger : a danger for the sick, some of whom torture themselves to discover the sin which has caused their illness, while others, chiefly occupied with the cure of the body, neglect that of the soul ; a danger for those in health, who may well imagine that because

they are not ill God has no fault to find in them ; and a danger to those who dispense this universal health, who go from place to place exercising their gift, real or imaginary, and who, when results do not correspond to the hopes they have raised in the credulous, have recourse to explanations, and even subterfuges, which compromise the cause of God rather than serve it. Respecting faith-healing generally, he adds, ' I do not assuredly deny that extraordinary bodily cures are not exceptionally granted to the prayer of faith. It may please God in certain cases to use His omnipotence ; but the attitude of the believer when he asks such favours should be that of Jesus at Gethsemane, " Father, if it be possible," and " As Thou wilt." '

Desiring to verify some of the 155 cases, two were selected for me by the pastor as being easy of proof, and consisting of real *organic* diseases. I will state further on my reasons for not accepting cases of paralysis, &c., as such, and also for not investigating any *functional* cases. As these expressions, ' organic ' and ' functional,' may not, perhaps, be understood by all, let me just say that an organic disease is a definite disease or injury that can be, if accessible, seen and handled, of any part or organ. A functional disease is merely a disturbance of the right *use* of the part, and would include all paralyses, pains of every description, all nervous and mental diseases. My inquiries, then, were actually confined to real organic disease.

The first case given me was that of a man, F. B., discharged as incurable from the army many years

before, on account of a local injury caused by a fall from a horse, and who, I understood, had been long attended by a doctor for that, and for incurable ulcers of the tongue. Receiving no benefit, the man came and was healed by faith of both complaints, and the doctor was said to have confirmed his cure. I could not see the man, but wrote to the doctor, who says that a man came to him with an ulcer on his tongue, for which he thinks he was treated *for a day or two*. Some time afterwards the same man reappeared, and showed his tongue healed, saying he was cured by faith; and also that he was cured of a local injury, *which, however, the doctor had never seen*. I clearly could not accept this case, for there was no proof that the ulcer was incurable at all, and the other injury had never been seen by the medical man. Men are often invalided from the army for slight causes, which may well disappear in time.

The other case was that of a most intelligent Christian woman, whose arm, cut at the wrist in 1879, remained in a sling, and well-nigh useless till 1883. She described it to me as withered, the hand being drawn up like a claw, and often in great pain. Suddenly one day, at Willesden Junction, thinking over the matter, she felt she could trust God for healing, and the pain immediately ceased. She came home and could at once partly use the left hand, and the use of the arm was gradually restored.

She gave me the name of the doctor who had pronounced the case 'incurable,' which at the time she said so I thought most incautious of him, for we find that

when the nerve is severed at the wrist from cuts, and total loss of power follows, it occasionally unites again after a time, and the power returns, of which the patient often remains unconscious until he tries to use it.

I examined her arm, which was now (1889) as sound as the other, saw the scar of the cut, and wrote to the doctor, a Christian, and physician to a mission hospital. To my intense disappointment, he replied, 'I have no knowledge of the case you write about.' But he added: 'The Rev. ——— prayed over and anointed one of my patients suffering from valvular disease of the heart. In this case she was pronounced cured, and a few weeks afterwards I was called in again, and found her heart in exactly the same condition. If you like I can give you her name and address.' This was probably one of the 155 cases in the list I was investigating. I wrote again, giving more particulars, but could obtain no further information as to the cure. So that neither of these two cases could be accepted as proved organic cures. A third was proved not to be a cure at all, and I did not hear of any others that could be verified.

It appears, however, that I was not alone in wishing to examine such cases. On Good Friday, 1884, at Liverpool, a large number of people testified to being healed of cancer, heart disease, blindness, &c. A doctor in Liverpool, doubting these cures, wrote to the *Liverpool Mercury*, asking for a doctor's certificate of *any one case* stating that the patient had been suffering from the disease at a certain date, and had

been examined since the 'faith-healing' and found cured. This only brought a contemptuous reply, but the doctor persevered; and within a month four test cases of organic disease healed by faith were produced, and carefully examined by the doctor (an unbeliever) and three devout Christian medical men, all believers also in the possibility of faith-cures. A shorthand writer was present. Only two of the cases could be physically examined, but all the histories were gone into, and previous medical attendants seen, with the remarkable result that, after full investigation for some weeks, 'it was the unanimous opinion of the medical gentlemen that *in not a single case* of the four could there be *the slightest claim* that they were "cures by faith" at all.' One, introduced as a case of cancer of long standing, was proved from the books of the Royal Infirmary not to have been cancer at all.

Curiously enough, a short time after this the doctor professed himself a believer in Christ through a Christian mother's prayers; and then, strange to say, coming across the very record of 155 cases above spoken of, was by them led to believe himself in faith-healing, the more easily, perhaps, as he at once disclaimed any wish for proof of their reality. Respecting the four spurious cases he himself had helped to unmask, he then noted, 'At least two were of such a character as do not *usually result* in spontaneous healing'; and added, without the slightest ground being given, that he '*now* believed they were all genuine cases of Divine healing.' It is evident that, however convincing his belief might be to himself, the

previously recorded judgment on the cures, the result of patient investigation by the four doctors, is what would alone have weight with others. So far, then, all had broken down. Not even this sympathising doctor could adduce any evidence for his belief in faith-healing, save that in the 155 cases he 'could not think that all these people were mistaken'! This, it will be observed, was not our question at all, but simply whether there was a single case of organic cure that could be authenticated.

CHAPTER IV.

INVESTIGATION OF CASES OF FAITH-HEALING.

KNOWING a Christian doctor favourable to faith-healing, I asked him if he could tell me of any genuine cures of organic disease. But he only shook his head. He gave me an interesting account of a great 'faith-healer,' who had got the promise of 'the growth of a new eye' eight years ago, but the 'manifestation' has not come yet. Another had been waiting for a new arm and leg some years; but had now lost his faith. The principal case at the faith-healing centre, near him, was that of a woman who was really dying, and had continual fits, and who, the doctor said, was undoubtedly cured by faith. Here then was an authenticated case at last of some sort. This woman gave great testimony as to her cure at various meetings, but as she had been my friend's patient he was able to tell me the secret of it. God had cured her by saving her soul, and thus delivering her from the love and constant excessive use of strong drink, that had been the sole cause of her illness and fits; and

that the doctor had often told her would end her life!

Another patient of his, seven years of age, the parents gravely informed him, had 'faith to be healed without medicine,' and so she was ill for twenty-four days of a bad cold that would have been cured in two or three; and the faith of the parents at any rate being somewhat weak, the doctor was sent for repeatedly during that time to say how the patient was progressing under the 'faith' treatment, but not to prescribe any remedies! Still persisting in inquiry for some organic cures, at last he told me of a remarkable case (a Mrs. H——) he had heard of in the south of London, of the immediate removal of a large tumour at a 'faith-healing' meeting. I at once set to work to verify it. The patient herself was at Brighton, but her friends told me the tumour was a fact, and that the doctor had decided to 'cut it out' several times, but delayed, and that at a prayer meeting it suddenly vanished; but they added, 'Soon after the swelling began again, and her husband says when she returns home he must take her to the doctors.' Fortunately, I found out her former doctors (one of them being a lady), and have received the following letter. Both doctors, I may add, are earnest Christians, and attached to Medical Missions. 'The swelling had appeared for some time, getting smaller and larger again; and I came to the conclusion it was a only collection of fluid, and suggested drawing a little off with the small needle of an aspirating syringe.' (This was the proposed operation to 'cut it

out'!) Shortly after, I heard that at a faith-healing meeting Mrs. H—— stood up and said 'she was suffering from a tumour, which both doctors had said must be operated on; but that the Lord had healed her there and then.' Afterwards Dr. H—— (the lady doctor) saw her, and found that the swelling was still there! So that this case, alas! completely collapses. But the other doctor does not end here. He adds, 'I am sorry I am not able to answer your questions more satisfactorily. As a Christian, I am greatly interested in "faith-healing," but' (note these words) 'have come to the conclusion that it is wiser for me not to examine patients, or pronounce on their condition, when they state that the Lord has healed them, for I feel it is too solemn a thing to shake a person's faith by too critical pathological knowledge.' Comment on these words coming from a friend to the movement is needless.

About this time a Christian came to me and said: 'I know the very case you want; a lady of education, mistress of a large school, who has been cured by faith of a terrible cancer, and she will be only too glad to give you all particulars.' I wrote, and though, as will be seen, the letter does not speak of cancer, its tone is so genuine, its details so interesting, that, wishful to place the whole subject in its fullest light before the judgment of our readers, we give somewhat copious extracts:—

'I gladly reply to your letter, but must begin by saying that I have never stated I was cured of cancer, because, though the doctor whom I consulted, the late

Dr. N. H——, considered the case as one of cancer, it was, perhaps, at too early a stage for a pronounced decision. In 1873 symptoms of consumption showed themselves, beginning in the throat. I was then thirty-four years of age. Dr. L—— and Dr. T—— gave it as their opinion that I was incurably ill, and I was sent to Hastings, where I became rapidly worse. In January, 1874, under fresh treatment, I began to improve and recover. In May I went back to Liverpool, and my doctor declared the disease in lung and throat to be no longer active, and said that I had made a “miraculous recovery.” But I was a semi-invalid, and after a long attack (six months) of acute and continuous neuralgia in the right side of my chest and arm, I was sent abroad to Pau, and spent two winters there, obliged even there to wear a respirator, and use all the precautions of an invalid. In the ensuing summer I had pleurisy, with water on the lung, in England, and spent the following winter in Torquay. I think it was about two or three years later that I began to feel the pains in my breast, and it was about the end of 1881 that, by my mother’s wish, I consulted Dr. H——. In August, 1882, on my way to Switzerland, I went with my brother, a missionary in Spain, to a meeting, where the Lord gave me a great spiritual blessing. I was not thinking of nor seeking physical healing; but in a flash there came to me the conviction that an all-sufficient Jesus could release me from the bondage of nervousness at sea from which I had suffered all my life, and which had been an intense humiliation to me, besides a

terrible pain. Do you know yourself what nervous terror is? I only knew it under those circumstances; but it was terrible, and prayer, as well as reasoning and will, was apparently unavailing against it. That evening I trusted the Lord with my nerves, and I praise Him this evening, a little more than seven years after, that I have never suffered from them since, except twice, here in the house. On those two occasions I believe they were a warning to me of failure in duty and judgment. My breast and the glands under the arm being very painful, I went afterwards to H——, where Pastor S—— has a house, but not with the idea of seeking healing. There the Lord led me to see distinctly His will that I should trust Him directly with my body. I had no conviction that I should be healed, but I just asked Him to take me and let me die or live to His glory as He saw fit. That was on Monday afternoon, and on Wednesday morning I was anointed according to James v, and had no feeling at all, only the word from the Lord in my soul, “sealed unto the day of redemption.” The pains decreased, and in a few days were gone, and have never returned. Then one day, with a kind of panic, came the thought of my respirator. How could I face the winter without it? I said to Mr. S——, “I have worn a respirator in the winter for many years.” “Oh, indeed!” he said, “what a glorious opportunity for testimony you have!” I have never worn it since, and I have been out in all weathers, and up to eleven o’clock at night, after close hot meetings, many times since then.’

We need to add nothing to this simple and touching story, save that it is obvious it does not really help us to establish organic cure by faith, and that it shows the real ground on which widely circulated reports of 'cure of cancer' generally rest. As to what was really cured we have not the least idea, but there evidently was the removal of great pain, at any rate.

Turning for a moment to another source of information, the daily press, we find the following, which caused great sensation some months ago in the little town where it occurred :—

'FAITH-HEALING.—A sudden recovery from a serious illness has created much amazement in ——. A little more than seven months ago Mr. — was taken ill with chronic rheumatism and hysteria, which seemed to affect every nerve in his body. Prior to his illness his sight had been bad, and now he became totally blind in one eye, and gradually began to lose the power of vision in the other. He was brought back from Bath a helpless invalid. For a month past, up to Saturday last, he was utterly prostrated, and never left his bed, nor could he well raise his body therein without assistance. On that day there came from London a minister who sometimes preaches in the chapel which the sick man was in the habit of attending. He had known the patient for some years, and was well acquainted with all the circumstances of his illness. Upon his arrival in — a small party assembled in the chapel, and there prayed that the Giver of Life would restore their brother to health once more. The minister and five others then

proceeded to the sick chamber. Their friend lay so prostrate and ill that they scarcely dared to speak to him. Solemnly they "anointed" him by pouring a few drops of oil on his head, and then laying their hands, in turn, upon him. Kneeling then by the bedside, prayer was once more offered, when, within ten minutes of the arrival of the party, Mr. —, of his own accord, sat up in bed, a thing he had been unable to do for weeks. He took from his face the shade which for two months had covered his eyes, and at once exclaimed, "I can see." At first his fingers appeared dimly to his vision, then his eyes gradually became stronger, and soon he recognised the friends around him. All pain had entirely left him. The onward progress did not stop here, for, to the amazement of all, he soon after got out of bed, dressed himself, and walked downstairs unaided. For weeks no solid food had passed his lips, but, upon getting downstairs, he became ravenously hungry, and sat down and thoroughly enjoyed a hearty meat supper. He further tested his eyesight and read a chapter from the Bible before going back to his bed for the night. He enjoyed then what had been long denied him—a night of perfect rest, free from pain. Next day he rose, dressed, walked downstairs again unaided, and took a stroll in his garden.'

Now let us read two letters—one from the doctor at Bath, the other from a doctor in the town:—

'From a personal acquaintance with Mr. —'s symptoms, and from all I had observed in his case

while an in-patient here, the result which I am pleased to see has come to pass has not led me to share in the amazement which seems to have taken place in his town. His case was not deemed a serious one on admission, and in three weeks he was discharged "much better."

The medical man who attended the 'faith-healed' patient tells me 'the man is at work, that the eye is the same as it was, that he had slight muscular rheumatism, but that his principal symptoms were of the hysterical type.'

Naturally disappointed with continual failure, I turned again to what I may fairly term the glowing pages of the record of the great conference on faith-healing at the Agricultural Hall, in 1885, and noticed with pleasure that one afternoon the chair was taken by a medical man well known to me by name as an earnest Christian, one, indeed, whom I had already been recommended to consult as an authority on the subject. I found that during that single afternoon, amongst others, the following testimonies of apparently organic cure were given.

(1) J. T. lost his health in 1863, from continually breathing the poisonous fumes arising from the assaying of metals; getting chronic blood-poisoning of the most severe description in 1867; had to leave all business, and after trying physicians for eight years was sent to Australia. He returned a little better, but within a year he had to go out again. In 1879 he left Australia again for home, an apparently dying man, but reached England, and then had

resource to every sort of galvanism. He could neither touch nor take solid food. Was suddenly healed in Liverpool in 1883, and has not since had one sleepless night, or one fainting fit, and is quite well and strong.

(2) S. S., fifteen years' severe dyspepsia, said to be ulcer of stomach, could not even take milk. In June, 1884, went to faith-healing meeting at Exeter Hall from mere curiosity, because, 'though superintendent of a Sunday-school for many years, I had not grasped the faith-healing, because ministers preach only half the Gospel—that Christ is the healer of the soul and not of the body.' (!!) He felt a thrill, and went straight to an eating-house in the Strand, took a hearty meal for the first time for years, kept one bottle of medicine as a relic, and was never ill again.

(3) H. W. B. had been nearly deaf in one ear for many years, which was cured at once.

(4) J. M. says his case is well known; had an enlargement or growth on the side of the foot, which was then amputated. It afterwards grew again worse; went at last to the Royal Free Hospital, and was then taken to Sir James Paget's house, who told him that there were two 'separate actions in the one limb,' and said, 'We don't know what causes it; did we know, we might do something for you.' After six years of suffering, being on crutches five years, and never having touched the ground with the foot for three years, he got healed by faith, and has walked well ever since.

Without going into further interesting experiences,

I thought these enough to show that the doctor was the right man to give some authentic cases of organic cures, seeing these had been brought before him on a single afternoon. I therefore wrote. My feelings may be imagined when I received the following: 'I am afraid it is not in my power to gratify you. I quite believe in Divine healing, and have seen what I believe to be many such cases. I do not think, however, that I could satisfy you that any of those cases I have seen were purely organic.' How the doctor should have been satisfied himself and not be able to satisfy me on a question, not of opinion, but of simple fact, I could not understand; however, the result remains that again no evidence could be obtained.

The following is a fair specimen of the class of statements received. This case I have not investigated for want of sufficient data.

'Dear Sir,—I trust you will excuse my taking the liberty of bringing before your notice a very remarkable case of organic disease alleged to have been healed by faith. The *Christian Herald* of Nov. 4, 1889, states that in a meeting at Bethshan there was present a Mr. George Evison, who had had his sight restored "after his eyeballs had entirely perished" (*sic*) and left empty sockets (!). The case was fully reported in *Thy Healer* for August. A medical man present at Bethshan confirmed Mr. Evison's statement about the loss of his eyeballs, so that the case appears to present all the conditions of which you are in search.'

Before leaving this part of our subject, let me give one or two instances more of cases I have met with or known of. The testimony of Canon Wilberforce as to his own cure is familiar to many, and may be regarded as typical of some others. It clearly shows that, however remarkable the case may be to himself, it would not serve as evidence to inquirers. He writes :

‘I have no shadow of doubt that I was healed by the Lord’s blessing upon His own word recorded in St. James ; but, as in so many cases, there was *sufficient margin of time, and possibility of change of tissue* between the anointing and the recovery to justify the sceptic in disconnecting the two, therefore my experience has been of more value in strengthening my own faith than in the direction of public testimony¹.’

There is no doubt that this is the case with most of those who are really healed. To themselves the cure by faith is beyond question, but at the same time it is justly capable of a different interpretation by others. With regard to the general bulk of so-called faith-cures, it is undoubtedly still more open to question as to whether any real cure has been effected at all ; and yet in most cases the sufferer has experienced some relief, due to some mental process, even if Divine interposition be not the cause.

The following is a specimen of thousands of such cases.

‘I went to K——, sick in mind and body, when

¹ The italics are mine.

I gave myself to Christ. I am now so happy and so well. Up to that time I had suffered much, and had been for about four years frequently in the doctor's hands. I had taken wine, mineral waters, invalid stout, and plenty of medicine. Since then (less than a year) in all cases of pain or illness I have been healed in a few hours.'

The artless vagueness of these cures will be found still more striking when contrasted with the carefully authenticated cases we shall presently give. The following is another cure of a well-known worker, who only allows her case to be mentioned 'for the glory of God.'

'I was ill with diseased lungs; medical words were "lungs gone." At the same time, two of the vertebrae of my spine were "ossified," causing intense pain in all the limbs. The Lord healed me in 1877, and ever since then, no matter what my illness, the Lord heals me. That my lungs are healed you will believe when I tell you that in all weathers, summer and winter, I speak in large or small meetings, and often twice a day.'

This lady speaks of her vertebrae being ossified, which shows absence of clear ideas and of accurate language; but let that pass. We must make one remark here on the words 'lungs gone,' which at best is an extremely inaccurate and highly figurative form of speech, that cannot be too strongly condemned when we are searching for the truth. What the disease was we are not told; that the lungs were not gone the writer herself is evidence. At the same

time the sudden arrest of advanced lung-disease amongst Christian workers who have earnestly placed the matter in God's hands is not at all uncommon; one of the most successful evangelists in England having, it is said, only half of one lung sound, and having been 'given up' frequently, and yet has since addressed thousands in the open air. But then, on the other hand, we get the same mysterious arrest of disease in other cases. One of our most popular physicians was condemned to death for lung-disease some forty years ago. So bad was he then that when he got his first hospital appointment the physicians said, 'Poor fellow, let him have it; he will be dead in six months.' All who said that have died themselves, and the doomed man is now in perfect health.

These instances could be multiplied to any extent. It is very far from our purpose in quoting these cases to cast any doubt on the genuineness of the cure; the only question appears to be by what means it was effected, and how far it is the result of miraculous power, and how far the result of natural causes.

We could continue to give pages of most interesting unproved or unprovable cases, but enough has been narrated to show that, in England at any rate, we have found it impossible directly to verify a single organic case. This does not, of course, show that there are none such, but it makes it most probable that even if there are, they are from some cause unfortunately incapable of proof. Our own opinion is that whatever belief the sufferer may entertain as to

the cause of his cure, he and his friends only ultimately damage the cause of religion by asserting not only what they have never tried to prove, but what perhaps cannot be proved. Every published case ought to be accompanied by regular medical certificates, accurately stating what change has occurred, with all needful details. At present all properly certified medical proof of 'faith-cures' is entirely wanting, which is all the more to be regretted as most of the 'miracles' abroad are most carefully authenticated, as we shall see. Protestants, from some unknown reason, seem to shrink from skilled investigation much more than Catholics.

In closing this portion of our subject, we will describe one remarkable case that seemed at first to be on the borderland between the natural and the miraculous, every detail of which has been personally investigated by the writer, to whom also the patient is well known. M—— D——, thirty years of age, has been—with her stick and white dog—a familiar figure in Bayswater for about fifteen years, and is well known as Blind M——. Close inquiry as to her condition and antecedents revealed the fact that she had been considered incurably blind from birth. She had been treated at Charing Cross and Middlesex Hospitals, and at Moorfields; and had also long attended at a society for the blind in Red Lion Square, where she was taught to read the raised type. She had a faint perception of light occasionally, but nothing that was of any real use to her. She was seen by one or two other doctors besides those at the hospitals, who told

her there was no cure for her. Several people who have known her for a varying number of years, have testified to me that she was practically blind. A general grocer, where she has dealt for years, told me he has often stood unseen beside her for a trick, when she has kept calling for him, and that she gave no evidence whatever, at any time, of being able to see anything she bought.

Hearing, one day, that this blind girl had received her sight, thrown away her stick, and wanted to sell her dog, and was now employed as nurse in a family I knew, I thought the case worth investigating, and I found the following was what had actually taken place.

About 1882, she joined the Salvation Army as a soldier, her blindness exciting great compassion. For seven years she remained in the same state, the Army as such not holding 'faith-healing' meetings. On March 25, 1889, however, a 'Major' P——, an aged officer of the Army, came to Bayswater, and held, on his own account, a 'faith-healing' meeting in the local barrack of the Salvation Army.

M—— D—— heard, of course, of the meeting, and the day before told every one where she lodged she was going to receive her sight the next day—she was sure of it. She started off in the evening, telling the people she should never need her stick and her dog again.

At the meeting she was seated in front with other cases of bad eyes, imperfect speech, and lameness awaiting healing,—who, by the way, were all healed,—one girl S—— D——, now in Australia, also

regaining her sight. 'Major' P—— in a letter to me describes what took place as follows :—

'M—— D—— was healed miraculously by the Lord in answer to prayer and faith. As directed by James v, I anointed her and prayed over her in great faith, after which she kept quiet for about twenty minutes, and then she suddenly rose to her feet, crying out, "Bless the Lord, I can see everybody in the place; what will my mother say when she gets to know?" Everyone was amazed, for they saw it was the work of the Lord.'

Her own account is that her eyes (closed) were rubbed violently for some minutes, and then, after a while, when she looked up she saw light clearly for the first time, and jumped up and clapped her hands. She found her way down off the platform and looked at her friends' faces, and was astonished to find them look so large. She had imagined they were much smaller. She walked home without her stick and never used it, or the dog, again.

On questioning the grocer (who is no follower of the Salvation Army), he told me there could be no doubt as to the change in her sight since March 25. She would come into his shop now and not only could see him, but his wife's shadow on the red curtain as she sat in the room behind the shop.

In a short time she got a place, as I have said, as nurse-girl. I called and saw her in service. She went there daily, having to walk over a mile from her home to the house, a small villa in a long row, which she could only distinguish by the number;

once or twice she had gone to the wrong house. She took the children out in the perambulator. I found on examining her that her sight was still very imperfect, but such as it was it simply filled her with delight. She could tell colours and objects readily, and was learning to read. She knew her letters already. She had great difficulty in seeing objects below the level of her eyes, but could see them well above. Some considerable change in her sight had undoubtedly taken place, and, as far as I could gather, at the said meeting.

I took her to two of our leading oculists, who very kindly examined the case for me. The first found that both lenses of the eyes were long gone, probably through cataract of the eyes in infancy. The eyes were also extensively diseased internally. His theory of the change was that the opaque skin that sometimes replaces the lost lenses, and of which some traces were visible round the pupils, might have been ruptured at the time by the violence used, and thus the sight was partially restored. He ordered her glasses by which her vision is greatly improved.

Another oculist did not think it possible the change could be thus effected, but made no alternative suggestion. A third at a hospital (where she was at once recognised as Blind M——) came to the following conclusion: 'that there was still extensive disease in both eyes of long standing; that there was no evidence of any recent change having taken place in the eyes; but that it is likely that previously she saw better than she thought she did, and that now she

thinks she sees better than she does, and that it is quite possible the alleged sudden improvement was due to nervous causes, the patient being of an extremely excitable nature.'

So here this case stands. It is only just to say, in passing, that the Salvation Army have never pushed the girl forward in any way since her cure, in which they have manifested no special interest, so that it no way partakes of the nature of an advertisement; and as a matter of fact the girl has now left them altogether.

Against the statement that the change was miraculous is the extremely imperfect and unsatisfactory nature of the cure, the still very imperfect vision, the intensely nervous state of the patient, who is also imaginative to a high degree, and the probability that the last doctor's theory may be true. On the other hand is the fact that some marked change has undoubtedly taken place, and that the disease was apparently organic, and that the girl's whole habits of life and means of livelihood have been altered since the 'cure.' To the girl herself it is as clearly the hand of God as the sun in the sky—whereas she was (nearly) blind, now she can see (better). In any such case the improvement of sight must come as a gracious and Divine gift, to be received, not with question and criticism, but with devout thankfulness¹.

¹ There are features in this case which recall to mind the cure of Blaise Pascal's niece, Marguerite Périer, a young girl who had for three years and a half been suffering from an affliction of the eye, with most painful accompaniments, when she was said to be healed by the touch

Since the above was written two years ago I have had the girl under constant supervision, and regret to say that her faith and her eyesight have both declined, and that now (1892) she can see only slightly better than at first. These cases, at any rate, are most deeply interesting, revealing to an extent one would hardly suspect the power of the mind over even the special senses.

In our next chapter we shall pass to a different class of cases altogether.

of the Holy Thorn, a reputed relic of the crown woven at the Crucifixion. The circumstances were investigated at the time, and although a large number of other supposed cures followed, the facts of which are beyond examination now, it appears certain that the girl was restored to health. Full details of this remarkable incident, which had an important influence on the controversies of that day, will be found in Beard's *Port Royal* (vol. i. pp. 304-16), where it is suggested that in this instance also the cure was effected by contact. At a critical moment the slightest pressure might bring relief, and the excitement of hope supply the conditions most favourable to subsequent healing.

CHAPTER V.

FAITH-HEALING AMONG THE ROMAN CATHOLICS.

OUR consideration of faith-healing would be quite incomplete were we to confine our inquiries to any one section of Christendom, and we will therefore narrate in this chapter a few cases from the Roman Catholic Church. As Protestants, rightly disgusted with the innumerable and barefaced impostures that abound in it, this may seem at first sight a waste of time ; but in selecting, amidst the vast collection of fables that surround Lourdes like a halo, a few instances that outwardly, at any rate, bear the semblance of truth, we must remember that the investigation of these cases was largely carried on by free-thinkers and sceptics, and that the priests for a long time doggedly refused to lend the slightest countenance to them, so that they were in no way originally manufactured by the Catholics, although many of the phenomena were undoubtedly the offspring of the superstition in which the peasantry of the country are enwrapped by their teaching.

It will be well to preface our instances with a brief record of the original superstition on which Lourdes is founded. The origin of its healing waters is said to be as follows: On February 11, 1858, at about noon, a little peasant girl, fourteen years old, called Bernadotte Soubirons, was gathering sticks with two other children near a small cave in the side of a hill, when in front of it an apparition of the Virgin appeared. She told her parents, who laughed at her. Another day she saw it again, in all eighteen times. Soon crowds heard of it, until as many as 20,000 people would be collected to watch her pray. She was imprisoned and threatened in vain. Both sceptics and Catholics scoffed at her visions, the priests would have nothing to do with it, and the nuns scolded her.

At last the proprietor of the ground fenced it in, got cavalry and infantry to guard the spot, and carried off all the wreaths and offerings laid on the rocks. Just before this, Bernadotte, scooping with her hand in the dry sand by command of the vision, is said to have opened a little spring, which gradually increased in its flow till it reached 100,000 gallons! This is the water used for cures ever since.

The people at length became so impetuous at being kept away that an appeal was made to the Emperor, Napoleon III, who ordered all barriers to be removed. The local authorities then sought to account for the miracles of healing that were wrought by the mineral virtues of the waters; but when these were submitted to the best analytical chemists, they were found to

contain nothing. Some say they have a chalybeate taste. And so the wonder grew—the little girl having retired from the spot to become a nun—in spite of all investigation and scoffing of sceptics, and in spite of the dislike and cold-shoulder of the priests. The number of cures, however, at last compelled their attention; and eventually, eleven years after the first apparition, the miracles were recognised by the Pope and sixty French bishops as genuine, principally as a result of the cure of a M. Henri Laserre.

This gentleman is the author of a French version of the Four Gospels, which was cursed by the Pope a year after he had blessed it. He belongs to an ancient family of Burgundy, and his father was a distinguished physician. In the short notice of his life which appeared some time ago in the *Sunday at Home*, it is mentioned that he is the author of many brilliant works; amongst others, of a successful reply to Renan's *Vie de Jésus* that ran through twenty-eight editions in one year. The authenticated cures wrought by the 'holy' water of Lourdes are recorded by him in two books. He says, in the preface to *Miraculous Episodes*: 'In the extraordinary cures we may relate we do not presume to decide on their supernatural character. In examination of the miracles my intention was originally to prove the reality of the disease and the certainty of cure. But after having made this indispensable medical examination I found myself carried into a wider and grander circle, in which I perceived from time to time the secret springs of Divine action, the mysterious movements of providence,

stirring up human souls, bending human wills, swaying circumstances, and bringing about events in obedience to the Divine will. In every case these episodes have been submitted to those cured, and are signed with their names.'

Let us now then proceed to consider the following instances, bearing in mind that, in spite of the sworn evidence, we have to deal with a Church of notorious tendencies to imposture, which may have crept in even here, as it is, of course, impossible for us personally to verify the facts. Nevertheless, they are certainly interesting instances of the better class of Roman Catholic miracles. Even if believed to be genuine, however, they by no means commit us to the slightest approval of the system of superstition with which they are connected; nor can they be looked upon as signs of the Divine approval of the Roman Catholic faith, any more than those we have already cited are proofs of the truth of Protestantism. In either case, if they are the result of the prayer and faith of the individual, in both instances directed to the same God, whether clouded with the dark mists of Mariolatry, or illumined with the bright beams of the inspired word, we may learn that God is sovereign, and works when and where He wills.

To show the care in verifying facts, of which we regret to say there is such a terrible lack, and even shrinking from in all English 'faith-healing' cases, as we have seen, we may cite the following. The commission reluctantly forced on the Roman Catholic Church, and composed largely of sceptical members,

who greatly deprecated these modern additions to their long list of miracles, submitted thirty cures to a rigorous investigation. In the inquiry the commissioners had to consider two things. First, the facts themselves gathered from human testimony. Next, the natural or supernatural character of these facts, gathered in great measure from medical testimony. They then first interrogated those cured with the minutest care as to the details of their maladies and the manner of cure, whether sudden or gradual. Parents, friends, neighbours, and all witnesses were personally examined.

When the certainty of the facts were ascertained they were submitted to the judgment of two eminent and authorised doctors. One was M. Vergès, doctor of the waters of Barèges, and the other M. Douzous, doctor of Lourdes. Each doctor stated his individual impression in a separate report ; sometimes rejecting the miracles, and attributing the cure to natural causes ; sometimes declaring the fact to be unaccountable, except on the ground of the supernatural agency of God's power ; sometimes coming to no decision, but remaining in doubt.

Two conditions were imposed on every witness who came before the commission ; the first was that he should depose to knowing nothing but what he was aware of through his own personal knowledge ; the second was that he should pledge himself by oath to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Any one in a position to dispute any of the cures was invited to be present. The first result was, that

out of thirty cures examined, six were deemed capable of a natural explanation ; nine most probably supernatural, but yet possibly wrought under the influence of some unknown force of Nature. Fifteen were declared to be absolutely miraculous and perfectly impossible, except through the direct intervention of God. With the labours of the commission the bishop of the province was satisfied ; nevertheless, to be quite sure, he sought one more proof—that of time. He allowed three years to elapse. A second inquiry was then entered into. The fifteen supernatural cures still remained. Not one came forward to dispute the facts.

So at length the bishop pronounced his verdict that the cures were genuine and miraculous.

All this sounds so very candid and straightforward, that we now narrate one or two of the ‘proved’ cases. No doubt they are mostly, as in all other cases, more or less functional, but one or two, at any rate, seem to be organic.

The first is a cure of varicose veins. A respectable joiner of Lavour, but of somewhat sceptical opinions, had suffered for thirty years intolerable agonies from a huge mass of varicose veins on each leg. A priest passing the house happened to mention he was going to Lourdes. ‘If so,’ said the man, struck by a sudden idea, ‘tell the Virgin I am worn out with suffering, and she must either kill or cure me’—a somewhat blasphemous expression, if it had been addressed to God, and hardly according with our ideas of faith. On July 19, 1871, the abbé returned from Lourdes

with a quarter of a pint of the Lourdes water. The man took it to his room, took off all his bandages, and gently moistened the diseased veins, the enormous lumps and the open sores. He drank the rest of the water contained in the bottle, and all this was said to be done with faith and earnest prayer. Instead of rolling up his bandages as usual for the morning, he flung them to the corner of the room, and declared he should never use them again. At midnight he awoke, felt no pain in his legs, passed his hands over them, the lumps were gone! In the morning the veins had disappeared, the ulcers were all healed, the lumps and knots had all disappeared, and the skin was soft and supple. His wife looked and trembled, and falling on her knees sobbed aloud. From that day forth he became an earnest believer. The truth of this astounding narrative is vouched for as follows:

‘I, the undersigned, declare that for about thirty years M. Macary, joiner, has been suffering from varicose veins in the legs. The varices, which were of the thickness of a finger, were complicated with knotty flexion cords, strongly developed, and required to be methodically compressed up to the present by bandages and dog-skin garters. Ulcerations were frequent in both legs, requiring absolute repose and long treatment. [*Any doctor will appreciate this statement.*] I have examined him to-day, and could only perceive some few traces of his enormous varices. This case of spontaneous cure appears to me all the

more surprising since the annals of science make no mention of any fact of a similar nature.

‘SÉQUI, Consulting Physician of the Mutual Aid Society of St. Louis.

‘Lavaur, August 16, 1871.’

‘I, the undersigned, certify that for about thirty years M. Macary, joiner at Lavaur, has suffered from varices in the legs, accompanied with enormous nodosities and frequently complicated by large ulcers. That now these varices have suddenly disappeared, leaving no other trace of their presence than a nodosity, sensibly diminished, on the inner and upper part of the right leg.

‘ROSSIGNOL, M.D.

‘Lavaur, August 25, 1871.’

‘Seen for the legalisation of the above signatures,

‘THE MAYOR, ETIENNE DE VOISIN.

‘Lavaur, September 3, 1871.’

‘Seen for legalisation of the signature of M. Etienne de Voisin-Lavermen, Mayor of Lavaur, hereto set.

‘THE SOUS-PREFECT, CELLIÈRES.

‘Lavaur, September 4, 1871.’

The other cases we must give more briefly, but have reason to believe they are authenticated with equal care. A workman called Louis Bournett had lost the sight of his right eye for twenty years from blasting a mine in the quarry. Hearing of the virtues of the new spring at Lourdes, he sent his child to fetch some of the muddy water. He rubbed some on his eye, and immediately uttered a loud cry. His

sight was restored. All was haze at first, but he kept applying the water, and could soon see perfectly. A day or two after, in the square at Lourdes, he met M. Douzous, who had attended him for years. 'I am cured,' he said. 'Impossible,' said the doctor; 'the injury done to your eye is organic, and therefore absolutely incurable. My treatment cannot restore your sight.' 'It is not you who has cured me, it is the Virgin.' The doctor shrugged his shoulders, drew a note-book out of his pocket, and wrote a few words in pencil. With one hand he closed the man's good eye and held the small pencilled scrap before his hitherto blind eye. 'If you can read that, I will believe you.' Bournett read aloud: 'Bournett has an incurable amaurosis, and it will never be better.' On this evidence, Dr. Douzous and Dr. Vergès, of Tarbes, deposed before the commission that this was a *bonâ fide* miracle.

A case of special interest, because being of a child two years of age, all faith in the patient is excluded, is that of the deformed child of Croisine Ducouts. The infant had been paralyzed from birth, and was at the time just dying of a low fever. Its winding-sheet was actually being made, when its mother, seized with a sudden idea, took the child out of its bed, carried it to the grotto, in spite of the anger of her friends, who thought her mad, and actually held the dying babe in the icy water some fifteen minutes.

She folded the child, apparently dead, in her apron and returned home, and placed him in his cot in a

profound sleep. Next morning the breathing was calm and regular, and the fever departed. The day after, when the mother returned, the child had got out of its cot and was walking about the room, its limbs being perfectly restored. M. Peyrus, his doctor, said no science could explain this fact. Drs. Vergès and Douzous both separately examined the child, and deposed that this cure could only be attributed to the miraculous hand of the Almighty. Eleven years after, he was a strong, rough schoolboy.

The case of Mdle. Jeanne de Fontenoy is so well authenticated and above suspicion that, though probably a functional cure, it is worth recording. She was daughter of a celebrated glass-maker of Baccarat, and in 1867, at the age of twenty, was thrown out of a carriage, which fell on the top of her, and paralysis of the legs soon set in. She was successively treated by allopathy, homœopathy, and hydropathy, but in six years had got steadily worse. She then went to Lourdes, though her own bishop pronounced it a signal act of folly! Then she was restored enough to walk, but soon relapsed, left Lourdes in disgust, but after months of suffering returned in 1874 once more, more dead than alive. She bathed in the waters with no result, but suddenly at church all her paralysis and pains left her, and she was cured, this time permanently. In 1882 she was to be seen at Lourdes in perfect health, ministering to the sick. Marble tablets of her cure are put up at Lourdes, and at her home. There can be little doubt that this cure, of which, however, a great deal is made (its

narration alone occupying some seventy pages in M. Laserre's book), is a purely functional one, and can be paralleled by hundreds in this country. We merely give it, being no doubt genuine, as far as it goes, as a sample of the more ordinary cases.

At Nay, in the Basses-Pyrénées, was a boy of fifteen called Henri Busquet, who, after typhoid fever, had suffered for two years from a huge abscess extending over his chest and one side of his neck, and drawing his head down on one side. He had been told never to use cold water; but getting a little from Lourdes in a bottle he washed and bathed his wound in it. In the morning the swelling was gone, the ulcer healed being a solid scar. The medical report declares this cure to be plainly supernatural. At twenty-five Busquet was a strong man, with no return of his disease.

In the same town of Nay lay a poor woman, called Rizan. For twenty-four years she had been suffering from paralysis down the left side, left after cholera. Her hand was withered. She constantly vomited blood, and could take nothing solid. She was always cold. The wasted limbs had swollen greatly with dropsy. She had little sensation, and no power in either leg, and constantly lay in a heap. Two doctors attended her, but, in spite of all, dreadful bedsores formed, and she lay at the point of death. Her son was sent for by Dr. S——, and received his mother's last blessing. 'She will die during the night,' said the doctor. But, early next morning, the woman, still alive, sent her child to a neighbour for some

Lourdes water, which she drank and rubbed on her paralyzed limbs. In a few minutes she felt cured, and asked for something to eat. The daughter, Lubin, offered her some coffee. 'I want some bread and meat,' she said; 'I have not had any for twenty-four years.' So she ate, and then absolutely got up and looked for her clothes, put them on and knelt down. The doctor at once acknowledged the cure miraculous.

An account of the miracle appeared in the *Message Catholique*, a paper that was read by a M. Morea, who had a daughter who had lost the sight of one eye, and the other was going so rapidly that, after trying everything, the patient was about to start for Paris. The father on reading was filled with faith, and determined to try the water. So he persuaded his girl, who had not faith herself, to tie on a bandage soaked in the water. Next morning she could see well, the bloodshot appearance had gone, and she could read easily; she was cured. Bernont, the oculist, wrote that 'the cure is a permanent one, and its instantaneousness is beyond the power of medical science to accomplish.'

Henri Laserre's own case, touching as it is, seems after all a purely functional case; his overworked and almost blind eyes were restored by the same 'holy' water applied in earnest and simple faith. The cure, however, is none the less real to him, whether the case be organic or not, and with it we may close the instances from Lourdes.

In Knock, in Ireland, authenticated cures have undoubtedly taken place. Dr. Quin testifies to one

girl of Belfast who suffered from bad abscesses for years, and who was entirely cured by a pilgrimage to the shrine.

Some remarkable instances of Roman Catholic 'faith cures' are those of Prince Hohenlohe, an honourable dignitary of the Church in 1822. The following letter from Louis, Prince Royal of Bavaria, speaks of them.

'MY DEAR COUNT,—

'There are still miracles. The ten last days of the last month the people of Wurtzburg might believe themselves in the times of the apostles. The deaf heard, the blind saw, the lame freely walked, not by the aid of art, but by a few short prayers, and by the invocation of the name of Jesus. On the evening of the 28th the number of persons cured, of both sexes, and of every age, amounted to more than twenty. These were of all classes of the people, from the humblest to a prince of the blood, who, without any extreme means, received at noon on the 27th the hearing which he had lost from infancy. This cure was effected by prayer made for him during some minutes by a priest who is scarce more than twenty-seven years of age—the Prince Hohenlohe. The inhabitants of Wurtzburg have testified by the most lively and sincere acclamation the pleasure which my cure has given them. You are at liberty to communicate my letter to all and any.

'LOUIS (of Bavaria).

'Brückerau, July 3, 1822.'

Besides curing the Prince Royal, afterwards King, of deafness, Prince Hohenlohe performed large numbers of cures equally remarkable, but which we cannot here enumerate. As a pendant to these cures we give one more case of the healing of a Roman Catholic priest, which may, perhaps, throw a good deal of light on those already given. But for the clear and candid mind of the sufferer, and his subsequent conversion to God and abandonment of the Romish faith, it would probably even now rank as one of their leading miracles. In it we get a real discernment of the general cause of cure in obscure cases, commonly attributed to Divine power. The instance is recorded in the life of Father Chiniquy, the apostle of temperance in Canada, in a revised edition published in London by John Kensit, 18 Paternoster Row.

The spring of 1837 witnessed a terrible epidemic of fatal typhoid fever in Quebec. Chiniquy was struck with it, and as he was supposed only to have a few days to live, another priest was appointed in his place. On the ninth day, his four physicians told the bishop there was no hope of his recovery. The last sacraments were administered, and on the tenth day he lay unable to utter a word and consumed with fever. On the thirteenth night the doctors stood round the bed and said: 'He is dead, or if not, he has only a few minutes to live. He is already cold and breathless, and we cannot feel his pulse!' These words filled Chiniquy with horror, for he feared being buried alive. He then had the most fearful vision of

judgment. He dared not cry to God or Christ for mercy because of his sins, but turned with every power in his soul to two favourite Canadian saints, St. Anne and St. Philomene, to whom he promised many offerings if they would but cure him ! Then in a vision he saw St. Anne, who said : ' You will be cured.' And he was cured ! Like an electric shock a thrill ran through him, the pains went, the eyes opened, warmth flowed to every part. He raised his head, stretched out his hands, which he had not moved for three days, and said : ' I am cured. Please give me something to eat. I am hungry !' The room was soon crowded, and to all he confessed St. Anne had raised him from death. Next morning Quebec rang with the miracle, and they crowded the streets that had been all covered with straw round his house to deaden the sound. The doctors came and cross-examined him ; two were Catholics, and two Protestants. Dr. Douglas, a Protestant, then showed Chiniquy that visions were common in fevers, that he had often prayed to these two saints before ; that having overheard he was about to die, he made a great effort to resist death ; that he was a man of remarkably strong will ; that the will had a real power over the body ; that there are many cases of typhoid fever on record similarly suddenly cured, and that it was the turning-point of the disease, and his strong will had conquered. Chiniquy listened, but preferred at the time to believe in his saints, and had a votive picture painted for St. Anne at a cost of 50/. A priest who saw it, the very curate of St.

Anne, told Chiniquy the cure was no miracle, and not only so, but that all the crutches hanging round the church were left by begging impostors in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. The hundredth was lame, but cured by the natural effect of the mind over the body. 'One of the weakest points of our religion,' this candid priest goes on to say, 'is in the ridiculous miracles performed every day with the so-called relics and bones of the saints. Don't you know that for the most part these relics are nothing but chickens' or sheep's bones?'

The day after the cure St. Anne's was crowded with ten thousand people, all of whom believed in Father Chiniquy's miraculous cure. The picture representing the dying man and the saint appearing to him and saying, 'You will be cured,' was in that church till 1858. In this year Father Chiniquy again got typhoid fever in Chicago, and on the thirteenth day was once more given up as dead. But this time he was a Christian man, and, while making a determination to get better, cried also to Jesus to cure him if it was His will. Shortly after he felt life returning, and sat up and asked for food, and then he fully saw the saints had no part in his previous cure, and his votive picture was taken down and burnt.

Perhaps if those at Lourdes had been gifted with the same vigorous common-sense and calm judgment as Father Chiniquy, many of the instances then received as miraculous could be found just as explicable on natural grounds. Within the last two months I have seen a lady recover from influenza coupled with

pneumonia and diphtheria, and I can only attribute her restoration to the indomitable will she possessed, determining to live even when at the worst, and as a result pursuing with untiring zeal all the treatment ordered. In this case also the sufferer was a Christian, and her resolution in no way sprang from any fear of death. Instances of those who have died because they made up their mind to die, those who have lived because they have made up their mind to live, are very common.

Notoriety has recently been given once again to the question of Roman Catholic miracles by the revival of the superstitions connected with the Holy Coat of Treves. Without entering for a moment on the discussion of the possible or probable authenticity of the ancient woollen tunic that has been shown at Treves as the seamless robe of our Lord, and publicly vouched for by the bishop as such on behalf of the Roman Catholic church, and visited by endless processions of pilgrims, we may just glance for a moment at one or two remarks upon it made by a well-known Romanist writer (the Editor of the *Month*). Arguing from the fact that the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment was made whole by 'virtue' that went out of the Lord, he proceeds to assert that in the same way 'virtue' proceeds from the Virgin when the water of the spring at Lourdes heals any sick person; and 'virtue' still goes out from Christ when any one is healed after touching the Treves relic.

There is, therefore, the writer says, 'an infused and derived virtue in the garment itself.' How contrary this is to the spirit of Christianity, the words of our

Lord plainly show when He rebuked the Jews of His day for their worship of shrines and relics in those memorable words, 'Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous.' These, like their successors, worshipped and honoured the material relics of God's messengers while turning a deaf ear to their solemn message.

The proofs that the present exhibition of the Holy Coat has been attended by miraculous cures will (we are told) be given to the world in due time. They are at present withheld, as the Bishop of Treves has 'thought it well not to publish the miracles God has wrought until they have been thoroughly tested by the lapse of time and by scientific investigation'; a highly praiseworthy course, and one which we commend in earnestness and sincerity to all interested in the subject of 'faith-healing.'

A brief *résumé* is, however, given of 'miracles' wrought by the coat in 1844. Curiously enough, the writer admits the possibility that, even in the case of a spurious relic, cures might be wrought, though necessarily limited to *the effect of a strong imagination, or of the influence on the nervous system of a persuasion of the miracle-working qualities of the article in question.* No words could better express to our minds the true cause of the miracles at shrines and relic-exhibitions at Treves, Lourdes, and elsewhere.

But let us glance at the three most 'remarkable' that were wrought in 1844, as selected by the writer on account of their indubitably supernatural origin.

The Countess von Droste-Vischering had her right leg fixed at a right angle by a swelling in the knee of two years' standing. On touching the relic she was able to put the foot to the ground, and though the pain and a limp continued she was sufficiently recovered to become a Sister of Charity and partially to use the limb.

Sir Benjamin Brodie long ago said that four-fifths of the cases of knee diseases among the upper classes were purely hysterical. Further comment is needless : the case being fully explained by the sentence printed in italics ; the only difficulty being why the cure was not more complete—for we have seen many such cases recovering entirely ; neither pain nor limp remaining. The 'miracle' was lamentably imperfect, and yet this was 'the cure that made most stir in 1844.'

The description of the next miracle is so confused and grotesque as to be almost beyond criticism. We are told that a girl, Caroline Koch, met with an accident that cut the 'pupil of her eye' in two. It is impossible to conceive what is meant by this. This accident apparently fixed the eye in some extraordinary way, for it no longer 'moved to and fro with the other.' But the 'cure' is the most marvellous part. The iris, we are told, partly reappeared, and an 'artificial' pupil formed to replace the original one that had been destroyed. This extraordinary nonsense is, of course, best appreciated by the medical mind ; but all will wonder how an 'artificial' pupil can 'form' in an eye. In the first place the 'pupil' is not anything at all, but merely the name for the hole in

the centre of the iris, that looks black because the interior of the eyeball is dark. But, even supposing the pupil was anything, how could it be artificial if it 'formed' ? unless, indeed, the whole 'miracle' were so. Surely the writer meant to say a 'natural pupil,' but he does not do so, and even if he did, we should only have one absurdity replaced by another.

The third and last case is that of Anna Wagner, a woman of thirty-seven, who, for four years, had gangrene of the lower jaw. This sounds dreadful, but is not uncommon, and is certainly not incurable. On laying a picture of the Holy Coat on her face when at Treves, she returned home perfectly cured. It is impossible to say more about this case, save that the absence of all details renders it impossible to attempt to estimate its value or the suddenness of the cure.

That many cures have been effected last year as well, and will by and by be published, we have not the least doubt ; but we think the writer has in the italicised paragraph clearly suggested the *modus operandi*. For the sake of truth, and for the sake of the church's faith, let us hope that the 'scientific investigation' which is promised, may be strictly carried out. All Christendom, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, and the medical world also, desires to know the facts.

As a contrast to these cases of bodily cures we may add the following interesting and apparently genuine case of mental cure in direct answer to prayer. The Venerable Archdeacon Wolf describes (Oct., 1891) the incident as follows :—

‘We next came to the little church at Sang Teng, still amongst the boulders, and visited some of the Christians in their homes, and had prayers with them. The history connected with the founding of this church is somewhat interesting. Not many years ago on one of my visits to a neighbouring hamlet, where I had a small congregation, a man happened to be present who had recently returned from one of the Dutch settlements in the Straits beyond Singapore. His eldest son had long been deranged in mind, a lunatic in fact, which was attributed to demoniacal possession by the father and by the neighbours. He had heard, he said, of the power of the missionaries’ prayers to expel the demon, and begged me to pray for his son, whom he had brought with him to the church. The young man appeared quite out of his mind and seemed in agonies of terror on seeing me. His appearance was indeed wild ; he threw himself on the ground. I explained to the distressed father that God, the God of the Christians, alone had power to heal men and expel demons ; that He heard prayer, that He was the living God, that all I could do was to pray to God for the young man, and this I would gladly do. I then asked all the brethren present to kneel and join in special prayer for this poor demoniac. We all knelt ; the young man lay on the floor apparently in great terror, the father knelt by my side. I prayed, if it were God’s will, to restore the young man to health and deliver his soul and body from the power of the devil. The sick man then arose and was led to his home in Sang Teng. The following morning the father said his son

rose from his bed perfectly sensible and well, and in consequence of this perfect restoration to health, the entire family declared their faith in God, and destroyed their idols and attended the Sunday services. This happened seven or eight years ago, and the young man has never had a return of his lunacy, or any illness since then, though before this for years he was grievously afflicted with this disease, call it what you will. I had the great pleasure of receiving this young man and his father and the entire family into the Church by baptism, and in a short time after, in their own village, and in the little church provided by their energy, they were confirmed by the Bishop, and are now leading useful and exemplary Christian lives.'

CHAPTER VI.

HOW DOES FAITH-HEALING CURE?

SO far the cures of which we have spoken have all been directly connected with the name of God and Christianity. We come next to consider the still obscure but deeply interesting branch of faith-healing in which the virtue evidently lies in the faith itself, irrespective altogether of its object; or, in other words, in the direct influence of mind over matter.

Putting aside, then, for future consideration those cures which seem to depend on Divine interposition, we shall find that in the cases now to be considered faith in the remedy used is a *sine quâ non*. The cure being effected, and the means used shown to be inert, proof positive is afforded that it is actually the literal faith itself in the mind that mysteriously cures the body. Nor can this fact be got rid of by the shallow and untrue assertion that therefore either the disease or the cure must be imaginary. Both are, in innumerable cases, indubitably real. The disease can be found in the Registrar-General's list, and, though probably always functional, yet in some instances it at any rate

had such an appearance of being organic as to deceive the doctors themselves.

The following classification, though not altogether new, may be helpful in grouping these cases.

I. Those effected by faith in the personal power (often supposed to be Divine) of an individual.

II. Those effected by faith in the mental power or magnetic influence of a man.

III. Those effected by charms, idols, relics, and so-called witchcraft (often supposed to be devilish).

IV. Those effected by faith in medical remedies, and in appliances wholly ineffectual or inadequate in themselves.

We may give a few interesting instances from each of these groups, some of them gathered from Dr. Tuke's well-known work on the relation of Mind and Body, and from other similar books; others from personal knowledge.

In addition, in a fifth class, we may give one or two instances of the remarkable power of the mind over the body shown in other ways than in the one of disease; and in a sixth, instances of the cure of disease by the action of the mind, by fear instead of faith.

As examples of the first class—*Of cures by faith in the personal power (often supposed to be Divine) of a man*—we may cite the case of the power of the touch of kings to cure sickness. Dr. Carpenter tells us, concerning Charles II, 'Not only theologians of eminent learning, ability, and virtue, gave the sanction of their authority to its behalf, but some of the principal surgeons of the day certified that the cures were

so numerous and rapid, that they could not be attributed to any natural cause, and thus the failures were to be ascribed to want of faith on the part of the patients (the identical reason given now for failures). Charles II, in the course of his reign, had touched near a hundred thousand persons.' The service appointed by the Church of England for this supposed Divine healing was only withdrawn from the Prayer Book after the reign of Queen Anne.

A remarkable instance of this sort of cure is that of a child afflicted with paralysis, who was brought up from the country to Paris to the Hôtel Dieu. The child, who had heard a great deal of the wonderful metropolis, its magnificent hospitals, its omnipotent doctors, and their wonderful cures, was awe-struck, and so vividly impressed with the idea that such surroundings must have a curative influence that, the day after her arrival, she sat up in bed much better. The good doctor just passed round, but had no time to treat her till the third day, by which time when he came round she was out of bed walking about the room, quite restored by the glimpses she had got of his majestic presence.

A well-known example of the power of personal influence is seen in the belief, still held in parts of England, of the healing power that resides in a seventh son, especially if he be himself descended from a seventh son. We find a record of one in Cornwall who cured scrofula by touch; he stroked the place three times, blew on it twice, and gave an amulet to be worn. Early in the eighteenth century, in Hamp-

shire, a seventh son of a seventh son cured a number of people of lameness, and carried their crutches about as trophies.

A very curious case of the belief in the person is in the person of Dr. Tuke himself, and in connection with the extremely prosaic and apparently organic disease of 'warts.' Having heard of 'wart' cures by faith, and being at an asylum on an official tour, where of course he was the great person, and in the eyes of the inmates possibly almost Divine, he happened to see several afflicted with warts, and he solemnly predicted to the sufferers by what day each wart would have disappeared. He quite forgot the circumstances, but, on his next round, was agreeably surprised by the hearty thanks of his patients, who had been cured so near the time predicted that his fame as a 'wart-curer' was firmly established. A second more famous story of warts will find its place in another class.

Several other cases of cures by an imposing presence or by great reputation must occur to many, such as the quite inexplicable improvement in serious diseases often seen in patients after a visit from a distinguished consultant, particularly if fetched from a great distance, even though no change be made in the treatment. I have known many such cases. Those younger again in the profession, and acting as assistants, must often have been sorely puzzled at the marked relief that one visit from the doctor himself produces, a relief that cannot be explained by the means used. Further illustration is needless of this first class, so common are these cures around us.

A second class consists of *cures effected by faith in the mental power or influence of man*. Here it is not the personality of the man in which the faith rests, but in a mysterious influence or superior power supposed to emanate from him. Valentine Greatrakes practically cured the crowds that resorted to him by their mere belief in his superior powers and skill. At Cork, he used to sit for three days a week, from six in the morning till six at night, besieged by crowds; and when he came to London his fame filled the city. Amongst this class, although the connection may not at first sight be apparent, evidently fall most cases of modern 'hypnotism,' or more ancient 'mesmerism.' It may seem somewhat startling at first to hear them described as 'faith-cures'; but, bearing in mind that in their case the cure is by faith in the mental influence or power of man, we shall see, I think, that cures by these means mainly belong to this class. Let us not be thought irreverent in this descent from the holy places where prayer is made to these familiar marvels. The relation of the mind to disease may be most clearly seen, even in very grotesque associations.

In 1771, a Father Hell, in Vienna, performed numerous cures by the application to the body of steel plates of a peculiar shape that were supposed to transmit some magnetic influence. This mode properly belongs of course to our fourth section, but is named here, as from this mesmerism sprang. Another Viennese, called Mesmer, used these methods with several variations till one day, operating on a young lady, the idea struck him that he could dispense with

these plates altogether, and could effect the cure by passing his hand continually close to the patient, and thus conveying the magnetic fluid from his own body to her. Whether he himself believed or not in this discovery, or was far-seeing enough to discern that both plates and passes depended entirely for their efficacy on the faith of the patient, we do not know, but at any rate he was not slow to turn it to advantage. In course of time he removed to Paris and took a magnificent house. This was fitted up in the most gorgeous and unique style, so as to impress all the senses: the eyes by the novel and unexampled splendour of the room; the nose, by the rare spices burnt all over the house; the ear, by *Æolian* harps of many tones, and the entrancing voices of hidden operatic singers. His house was soon crowded by the fashionable women and men of the day, who were cured, in many cases undoubtedly so, in great numbers. The procedure was as follows. In the middle of a splendid saloon was a large vessel, about four feet in diameter, and one foot deep. In it were arranged a circle of bottles, corked and filled with 'magnetic' water, the necks outwards. These were covered with water, into which were thrown from time to time iron filings, to give a greater effect to the force. An iron lid covered all up, pierced with numerous holes, into which fitted iron rods one end of which descended into the water, while the other was being applied to the diseased part. The distinguished sufferers then sat in a circle round this vessel, holding hands and touching by the knees as well, in order to increase the

magnetic influence. Then the assistant magnetisers, powerful young men, came in, and gently rubbed the patients in various parts, at the same time staring them completely out of countenance. Perfect silence and stillness reigned for some time, broken only by the wild notes of some distant hidden singer or *Æolian* harp. The sensibilities of the nervous sufferers became gradually wrought up to fever pitch. They got hot, and perspired, and eventually one of the ring would go off in hysterical convulsions, then another and another, till perhaps nearly all would be in this state. Then arrived on the scene the great man from whom the curative magnetic fluid was to flow—Mesmer himself, clad in violet flowered satin, with a long white wand, with which he touched the affected parts. By a few strong words he generally soon succeeded in calming the sufferers, and in many cases they departed cured.

This went so far that the French Government appointed a commission to examine into the cures; and their report, to the effect that this supposed transference of 'magnetic fluid' had no effect if done without the patient's knowledge, finally stopped Mesmer's career.

But he left behind him an ardent disciple, who firmly and honestly believed in the 'magnetic fluid'—a Marquis de Puyseque. This disciple improved again on Mesmer, by transferring his magnetic fluid permanently to a common labouring man, who had now such an 'enlarged soul' that he performed in his turn miraculous cures; and, seeing also that Mesmer

could transfer the fluid to stone and wood, he argued, why not to a whole tree at once? so he mesmerised a large tree, every leaf of which he declared and believed to be full of magnetic curative fluid. Circular rows of benches were placed round it, and ropes attached to every part, and as many as one hundred and fifty or two hundred people would sit from morning till night, holding their ropes, and being—in many cases really—cured of their diseases.

This cure spread to England, and in 1789 a Mr. Southenbourg, a painter, and his wife, cured by their ‘magnetic power,’ by simply touching people, innumerable cases, principally nervous sufferers. At one time a crowd of three thousand people besieged their house at Hammersmith, although their charge was from one to three guineas a case. A curious list of the miracles they performed is found in an old book, published 1789, and entitled: *A List of New Cures Performed by Mr. and Mrs. de Southenbourg of Hammersmith Terrace, without Medicine*. By a Lover of the Lamb of God. Dedicated to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.’

If I record here cases so extreme, it is in no frivolous spirit that I present them; but rather to suggest the need of extreme caution in our judgments, lest we degrade that which should be held sacred.

The direct descendants of Mesmerism are *Braidism* and *Hypnotism*. Dr. Braid, of Manchester, discovered that a mesmeric sleep could be induced by a steady gaze at a bright reflecting surface just as well as by the ‘passes’ of a person possessed of mesmeric power,

thereby ending the theory of personal influence in his turn, just as Mesmer in his had exploded the virtue of Hell's metallic plates. But in Hypnotism we get again, in the cure by suggestion, and other incidents, a distinct revival of the element of personal influence.

Like its progenitor Mesmerism, Hypnotism flourishes at present best in France, where it has a semi-official status, and is employed as a successful mode of cure. About the year 1858, Dr. Liebault, of Nancy, conceived the idea of restoring the element of personal influence to Hypnotism by means of authoritative suggestions to the patient, and has successfully carried on that system since. In his dispensary at seven A.M. the patients come crowding in, suffering from paralysis, asthma, epilepsy, rheumatism, neuralgia, dyspepsia, and other ills. The patient, as we are told by a recent visitor to Nancy, is first seated in a large arm-chair, and put to sleep merely by surrendering to the personal influence and words of the doctor, who says: 'Your eyelids are becoming heavy; you can hardly keep them open. My voice sounds more and more distant; your sight grows dim, and objects appear indistinct to you. A numbness is creeping over your limbs. It is impossible for you to keep awake; your eyes are shut. [Here the eyes are held closed.] You are fast asleep.' And by this time the average patient really is asleep! The doctor then rubs and gently presses the parts affected, at the same time telling the patient, if a dyspeptic, that the pain that he now feels is to pass away; that his digestion is to become easy; that he is to take

food with appetite ; that the secretion and functions are to become natural ; that the circulation is to improve ! He next touches the head, and tells him that the aching is to disappear, that he will sleep at night. After these suggestions, the patient is allowed to sleep a few minutes more, when he is aroused by the wind of a fan. He is wide awake at once ; his pain has vanished ; his head is cool and clear ; and he returns home much better, to come again next day, and again till cured.

Such is the cure wrought by confidence in the doctor amongst the poor peasants of Nancy. But the same system is in vogue amongst the rich in Holland, where rheumatism, paralysis, and various forms of hysteria are cured as if by magic. In England, we find at Croydon, under Mr. Tooth (late of Hatcham), the same system practised under the accurately descriptive name of 'mental treatment.' A boy for instance suffering from infantile paralysis in left arm, leg, and face, comes to him. He is put to sleep, simply by word and will. Then the suggestion begins : 'This leg has been crippled for years, it is now getting very strong. You feel it to be stronger, don't you ?'—'Yes.'—'Now you are fast asleep. Get up and walk nicely. Very nicely, now ; walk with firmness, you are a man now. You are a young soldier ; step out with me. Shoulders back and head up.' The boy then walks up and down the room with ease. One of the most remarkable effects is that pain is not felt when in this condition. A Croydon dentist found that out of sixteen cases of extraction of

teeth in the hypnotic state, in fourteen no pain appears to have been felt. One boy had a little soreness in the jaw after. 'That will go away,' said Mr. Tooth, stroking the place. 'It's gone now, isn't it?'—'Yes,' said the boy, 'I don't feel it now.'

Turning to America we find a further refinement of the faith-cure by personal influence. It is called Christian science, or *the mind cure*, the second being the accurate title for it, and the first entirely misleading. It has as little to do with science as with Christianity. It rests on a pseudo-metaphysico-theological system that denies the reality of matter, and that of disease, and of sin. The promoter of it is a Mrs. Eddy, who asserts that she passed through a remarkable experience in 1866, recovering immediately from the effects of an accident which neither surgery nor the *materia medica* could reach. She then received a spiritual illumination into the true meaning of the Bible. She became acquainted with the Divine law by which Jesus performed His mighty works, and she claims to be able to heal all manner of diseases. Her cures of all sorts are numerous.

A few of her utterances from her leading work (2 vols. 8vo.) will show the absurdities of the system. 'Argue with the patient: "You have no disease; you are not in danger; you have nothing to fear and are perfectly well"; and you will find it soothes the symptoms of any disease.'

'To cure scrofula, and what is termed hereditary disease, you must destroy the belief in disease and the fear of its transmission.'

‘If the disease is consumption, begin your argument by taking up the leading point, showing that it is not inherited; that inflammation, tubercles, hæmorrhage, and decomposition are but thoughts, beliefs, mental images before mortal minds, not the immortal mind.’

‘Bathing and brushing, to correct the secretion or remove unhealthy exhalation from the cuticle, receives a useful rebuke from Christ’s-healing, that makes not clean the outside of the platter.’

‘Drugs, cataplasm, and whisky are shocking substitutes for the dignity and potency of mind.’

‘Ossification or any abnormal condition of the bones is the action of mortal mind as direct as insanity. Bones have no more substance than thoughts, and are only what they are named by and appear to mortal mind. What we call matter was primitively error in solution.’ (!)

‘Disease could neither be treated nor healed metaphysically if drugs or external application were employed; and *petitioning a personal God to do your work, or enable you to do it*, is not metaphysics wherein truth works.’

We see in the last utterance the amount of Christianity in the system!

The other day I came across a distinguished adherent of this system, which I find is variously conducted. In some cases it is by such suggestions as are given above. In others it is by sitting silently opposite the person and intently wishing the disease to go, and it goes. This lady had paid a ‘mind-

curer' to wish for a certain time each day she should not be sick in coming to Europe, and she was not. She came to the bedside of a patient of mine suffering from rheumatism, and so impressed her with this jargon of mind and matter that my patient, believing she was better, speedily recovered.

There is no doubt as to the curative power of the system in functional disorders; and *their* name is legion.

We come next to speak of *cures effected by charms, relics, and so-called witchcraft* (often supposed to be devilish).

Amongst this class come in all cures from the bones of saints, from bits of the holy cross. The relics being usually false, it must be plain even to the most superstitious that the virtue must rest in the faith of the sufferer.

In the wilder country districts of England and Ireland (more commonly than in Scotland) charms are still believed in, and in days past were often used with efficacy.

A few various instances may be given. They are interesting, not only from a psychological point of view, but as illustrations of the imperfect knowledge of earlier days. They have also an important bearing on pretensions still advanced. Ferrassi cured in one year fifty cases of ague by a charm, which consisted of a slip of paper with the word 'Febrifuge' written on it, one letter of which was to be cut off with certain rites each day. A Spanish lieutenant recovered at the 'f.' As much as ten guineas used often to be

paid in England for the hand of an executed criminal, and it was used to rub the body as a cure for scurvy. Paracelsus, at Bath, cured hysteria of all sorts by a crystal he called 'azoth.' Geillis Duncane was burned at Edinburgh in 1591 as a witch because she cured many by her charms. Barbara Paterson, in 1620, another 'witch,' used to cure people by washing their socks in the Dowloch, near Dumlanrig. Witches have been burnt for curing people by passing their hands through skeins of yarn at midnight, and other unhallowed ways.

Further, for ague, in Sussex the patient is recommended to eat seven sage leaves fasting for seven mornings; in Suffolk, to bury a handful of salt in the ground; while in other counties spiders' web pills are specifics. The knee-cap of a lamb, known as the 'cramp-bone,' is a specific for cramp, or a finger ring made from the screws of coffins, or tying the left garter below the knee. For epilepsy, beg thirty pence from thirty poor widows, exchange them with a clergyman for half-a-crown from the communion-plate, walk nine times up and down the aisle, then pierce the coin and hang it round the neck. Empty bottles full of pins are still found in old houses, which have been used for curing epileptic fits. For erysipelas, in the Highlands, you may cut off half the ear of a cat, and let the blood drop on the part. Headaches in Sussex, until recently, were supposed by some to be due to a bit of hair from a comb having been carried off by a bird and woven into its nest, which process caused the pain in the owner's head.

In Dundee, hanks of yarn are worn round the body as a cure for lumbago. The right forefoot of a female hare in the pocket cures rheumatism. Whooping cough was cured in Suffolk by wearing round the neck some hair plucked from the cross on the back of a donkey; in Scotland, by wearing a piece of red flannel round the neck, the virtue being in the colour, which is 'symbolical of victory.'

We do not prolong the list principally because we are not in a position to record definite cures from these remedies, which after all is our object.

At Männedorf, and all round Zurich, Professor Zeller, of Dorothea Trüdel's Homes, assured me 'the devil' cured many bad cases. He said they were real cures, and often as good as those wrought in the institute. They were effected by amulets worn round the neck and used in the name of the Trinity. He detailed many remarkable cases personally known to him, and all attributed by him to the devil; the real agent clearly being the faith of the individual. One extraordinary case he told me of a rich merchant near Zurich who cured himself (of gout, I believe) by depositing an amulet, with certain rites, in an oak-tree. One day he found the disease return, and, going to the tree, found it cut down, hence the return of his sufferings!

As to cures by relics, they are innumerable, and often effectual, whether, as we have said, the relic be true or false. If you wish to be cured of eye disease, you may go to Paris and be touched, like Mademoiselle Périer, whose case is detailed by Voltaire, with a thorn

from the sacred crown of thorns worn by our Lord. If you are lame, you may go to Aix-la-Chapelle, and let your leg be touched with the thighbone of Charlemagne. If you have the toothache, you can apply the teeth of St. Gudule, at Brussels, and so on *ad infinitum*.

I am told on good authority that I need have no hesitation in including under this head cures by idols, that undoubtedly cures are effected in their presence (we do not say by their means), and that one idol in India is particularly famous for its therapeutic power; the virtue, of course, still residing in the faith of the devotee. Further details of veritable 'idol' cures would be of interest. There are, for instance, large temples in China whose whole front is thickly covered with votive offerings for 'faith-healings.' It is not only possible but extremely probable that, if investigated, many real cures will be found to have been wrought; attributed by the people to their god, by some missionaries to the devil, by others, and we think with greater probability, to the power of the 'faith' itself.

The object of course in adducing cures by all these absurd and inert means is to prove the power of 'faith' as a curative power irrespective of its object; and when we have clearly established this beyond dispute, we shall be in a better position rightly to consider the whole subject.

We now turn to the class of cures which consists of those *effected by faith in medical remedies or appliances wholly ineffectual or inadequate in themselves*, and, it might be added, often administered in perfect

faith by the doctor ; for such is the credulity of man, that we believe that many of the remedies we shall enumerate may have often been administered in full faith by the prescriber.

There are but few hospitals where bread pills and red mixture (burnt sugar and water), administered regularly and taken in faith, have not effected mighty cures, and that, too, in diseases often otherwise incurable. Their administration is a crude survival of the belief on the side of the patient that all diseases are curable through the stomach by the swallowing of drugs, noxious or otherwise. No doctor, however, now believes that in these cases the remedy is the cause of the cure, for slowly but surely it is beginning to dawn upon us that most nervous diseases are most surely, easily, and naturally treated by mental therapeutics, and that the still persistent efforts often made to minister to a mind diseased by the stomach will ere long die out. The doctor, therefore, recognises in these cases the 'faith' that cures, and it ill becomes him, in the presence of such a healing power, to decry any form of faith cure, however little its process may be understood by him ; or, on the other hand, to doubt the existence of the disease, and ascribe it to imagination or 'hysteria,' or malingering, because, though not curable by drugs, it is so easily removed by faith.

It is to be hoped that the relations of the mind to the body will soon become better understood, and that we shall have in our teaching schools (what is at present so greatly lacking) those who can train the

coming race of doctors in the therapeutic use of the mind in functional disorders. Certainly experience increasingly shows that it occupies as clear and well-defined a place in relation to these diseases as drugs do in organic disease, although the *modus operandi* may in both cases be not yet fully understood. It is quite time that a reaction took place against the popular doctrine of the dependence of mind on body, which is fast reaching a *reductio ad absurdum* in the tracing of every changing mental state, and even of every morbid impulse or criminal action, to a deranged liver or an anæmic brain. No doubt before long the pendulum in England will swing over completely to the other side (as it has already done in America, to the ridiculous extent displayed in the mental cure we have already alluded to), and most bodily disorders will be attributed 'à la Mrs. Eddy' to a diseased mind. The truth meanwhile occupies as ever the medium position between the two, there being times when the body sways the mind, and other times when the mind sways the body, the two being, as has been forcibly expressed, something like a pair of coupled dogs, sometimes one and sometimes the other obtaining the victory, and sometimes both pulling together in harmony.

We will now give a few instances of this fourth class of cures. Here, as elsewhere, we cannot always distinguish between those which are organic and those which are functional. Take diseased joints, for instance. Sir B. Brodie says that four-fifths of these cases amongst the upper classes are purely functional

and of nervous origin ; and Sir J. Paget, that one-fifth amongst the lower classes are the same.

Turning then to cases of this class, we recall the great cure of scurvy at the siege of Breda, from which nearly every man of the garrison was suffering, in 1625, when the town was about to be surrendered. The Prince of Orange smuggled into the town three small phials, and the physicians put three or four drops of the precious fluid they contained (principally camphor) into a gallon of water, and dosed the men all round with this infallible specific. Strange to say, they recovered, and saved the town.

Sir Humphry Davy, wishing to experiment with some new preparation on a paralysed patient, put first a thermometer under his tongue. The man believing this was the new remedy, soon felt so much better that Sir Humphry told him to come the next day ; and in a few days, with the thermometer applied for a few minutes each day, he was well.

Lord Bacon, suffering when at the French court from warts, which he had had from childhood, had them at once removed by rubbing them with lard (with the skin on), recommended by the wife of the English ambassador, in whom he had implicit faith.

Dr. Ranieri Gerbe, of Pisa, cured 401 out of 629 cases of toothache by making the sufferers crush a small insect between their fingers that he represented was an unfailing specific.

Paulus Æginetus, a great court physician in the Middle Ages, gives a few choice receipts that probably derived their efficacy from the patient's faith. For

dyspepsia, for instance, 'A tepid bath followed by the milk of an ass newly drawn, to which a little warm honey has been added,' or 'the ankles of a swine burnt and taken in a draught,' are unfailing remedies. Or for a headache: 'A black torpedo applied alive to the head.' For a diseased heart, 'Bread and water, swine's feet, snouts and joints, all in a cold state, and the forehead rubbed with the juice of unripe olives,' are recommended. If an earache, and caused by a 'windy spirit,' inject into the ear the fat of a fox, and it will vanish.

Pills with spider-webs in them are even more efficacious than pure bread pills.

It is a matter for curious conjecture as to how far the cures we now attribute to drugs will be considered in the future also to fall under the fourth class, as being simply the results of the power of mind over matter. One test is fortunately open to all, and is specially to be recommended to any who honestly follow any system which performs cures by apparently wholly inadequate means. Let the minute fractions of the drugs which are given be administered wholly without the knowledge of the patient or the presence of the doctor, and it will be seen then in how many cases they prove inert. We would especially recommend this experiment in reference, amongst others, to a system of pseudo or so-called vegetable electricity that hails from abroad; the 'electricity' being a limpid-coloured fluid sold in small bottles, and claiming to cure even blindness and most other diseases.

There is, of course, no doubt as to the marvellous

cures effected when the remedy is administered with the knowledge of the patient. What would be of real value in this and similar systems is evidence as to the results when given without the patient's cognizance at all, say in his tea, &c., and without the visits of any medical man or, as is more common, prescribing friend, generally a lady.

Of this order, too, are the majority of the magnetic appliances sold, which, whether real or sham, are probably equally ineffectual in their intrinsic power to cure the diseases for which they are worn. The disease is cured, of course ; but it is by faith.

A. B. D. Perkin, a Quaker and a surgeon in Leicester Square, performed innumerable cures on gout, rheumatism and paralysis by the application of two small plates of metal to the part (something like Father Hell's), which he patented, called metal tractors, and sold for five guineas the pair. So great was his success that the Friends subscribed and built him a large hospital for the poor, called the Perkinian Institute. And this might have flourished till this day, had it not been for a certain wily Dr. Haygarth, of the Bath Hospital, who, suspecting 'faith' to be the agent, had wooden 'tractors' painted like steel, and got just as good results, curing four out of five rheumatic patients at once. This was also done with success in the Bristol Infirmary.

Coming to more modern days, we find in *The Hospital*, for October 1890, an account of a healer, vulgarly called a 'quack doctor,' met with on the way from the Medical Association at Leeds. This man

was surrounded by placards, one of which measured two yards by ten, covered with testimonials of cures for dropsy, lumbago, &c., signed by clergymen, ministers, and an inspector of police. The *modus operandi* was to select some one of the numerous applicants for immediate cure, say a man suffering from sciatica, make him mount the gilded chariot of the medicine man, and then rub him, screened from view, vigorously with a wonderful oil. In half an hour the patient was told to dress and walk, and he found his pain was gone and he was cured (temporarily, at any rate). There was afterwards no difficulty in selling the oil, which appears to be soap liniment with a little turpentine, at two shillings a bottle. Numbers also came forward to testify of previous cures of incurable disease of many years' standing, and there appeared no reason to doubt their word, they being people well known by those they speak to. This sort of cure went on every day.

CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER EXAMPLES OF FAITH-HEALING.

As it is of the utmost importance that our readers should be fully persuaded of the undoubted fact that every variety of modern faith-cure has been performed over and over again by the mere power of the mind over the body, to the exclusion of any external force—the simple means used being themselves wholly inert, and serving merely as an object for the mind to rest upon—we give a few more cases drawn from personal experience and the testimony of other medical men.

At the out-patient department of most hospitals hardly a day passes without real cures being effected in obstinate diseases, the means used being wholly inadequate, and some of these cases are very striking.

An intelligent woman called on me some short time ago, and in course of conversation told me she had been cured of epilepsy by the simple process of having a sprig of *arbor vitæ* sewed into the sole of each of her stockings. She seemed surprised that I did not know of the remedy.

A surgeon took into a hospital ward some time ago a little boy who had kept his bed for five years, having hurt his spine in a fall. He had been all the time totally paralyzed in his legs, and could not feel when they were touched or pinched, nor could he move them in the least degree. After careful examination the surgeon explained minutely to the boy the awful nature of the electric battery, and told him to prepare for its application next day. At the same time he showed him a sixpence, and sympathising with his state, told him that the sixpence should be his if, notwithstanding, he should have improved enough the next day to walk leaning on and pushing a chair, which would also save the need of the battery. In two weeks the boy was running races in the park, and his cure was reported in the *Lancet*. This is an interesting instance of the combined curative effects of fear and hope.

A few years ago at one of our largest London hospitals a distressing case of constriction of the gullet, involving total inability to swallow any sort of food, appeared in the person of a young woman, closely followed by her mother, who held a pot of meat-jelly in one hand and a spoon in the other, and vainly endeavoured to get a morsel swallowed. The girl was emaciated for want of food, and would probably have died but for a mental-cure. She was sent up-stairs into one of the wards, and, after the use of some simple but impressive means, in an hour's time she was seated at a table eating a hearty meal of boiled mutton, with plenty of turnips and potatoes.

A respectable woman, matron of a large institution, was suffering from total loss of voice to such an extent that she was obliged to resign her situation. She was placed under treatment, of which I need only say that it was wholly inert to restore the voice, save as an object for the mind to rest on as a curative agent. After a few applications the patient could read and talk perfectly naturally, and her voice was entirely restored.

A patient suffering agonies with toothache was told by a medical man to apply to the tooth a silver coin wrapped in silk. Believing it to be an infallible remedy, she did so, and was relieved. This happened several times. One day, however, she was told that the effect was wholly mental, and at once the remedy was powerless. Here is a valuable illustration of what we have strongly insisted on—that the faith must have an external object of some sort on which to rest, in order to effect a cure. Mental effort is not enough, and mental effort is not faith.

I will give but one more case of this sort. A woman was brought into the out-patient department on a couch, attended by two Christian ladies, suffering from complete spinal paralysis, with the history that she had been a helpless cripple in bed for two years, entirely supported by these two ladies, whose means were now exhausted, and they asked for a bed in the hospital until the poor woman (also a Christian) could be admitted into a home for incurables. A careful examination led me to believe that this was a case that might be cured by mental influence.

The potent means about to be used were explained to the woman, and in spite of the protestations by the two ladies at the folly of using any means in such a hopeless case, they were applied, with the cheering result that she felt a shade better, and could move her legs a little. Perseverance for two hours resulted at the end of that time in the woman walking briskly a measured half-mile in the waiting room, and the perfect and permanent cure of her spinal affection.

Passing on now, we will give, very briefly, one or two instances of the cure of disease by fear and other means, instead of faith.

In 1869, a gentleman in Manchester at a hotel, *en route* for London, was stricken with rheumatic fever. He had fearful pains, high fever, profuse perspiration, and all the symptoms of the disease. Being, however, most anxious to return home to London, in spite of all warning, he persisted in being carried into the night train for London. There was a serious collision, in which he was terribly frightened, but not hurt. He had to walk some distance in the cold, but all the symptoms had disappeared—his fever was cured. A hopeless epileptic never had another fit after seeing his own daughter burned to death.

In *Fraser's Magazine* for May, 1873, there is an apparently perfectly authentic story of a case of whooping cough cured by a good thrashing.

A man, called Peter Felton, of Reading, had the gout badly for twelve years, and was in bed with it at the time that a wagon drove right up against the

house, and smashed the window of his room. He sprang up with mingled rage and fright—permanently cured¹.

A literary man, far advanced in phthisis, and apparently actually sinking into the grave, suddenly obtained great and unexpected distinction, and the disease was averted and became dormant for years.

There are several recorded cases of dropsy entirely disappearing through fear.

A young lady of nineteen attended by Skey for a bad knee for weeks, that was getting so much worse that amputation was discussed, suddenly determined to attend her sister's wedding, and, to the horror of all, she got up, and kept her word, and was well in a week. This is interesting, because it is an instance of cure without any (even apparent) external agency. Nothing cured her but the sheer force of will.

In close connection with this wonderful power of mind over the body, and in order to impress it still more on our readers, may we, in closing these instances, give one or two well-authenticated cases not connected with bodily cure?

A young lady who had taken ether three and a half years before, on the inhaler being held three inches away from the face, and retaining a faint odour of ether, went right off and became unconscious without any ether being used, or the inhaler touching her body.

¹ The frontispiece of old editions of *Sandford and Merton* presented a gouty man locked in an iron room at the doctor's house, which gradually was heated, and the man's jumping cured him!

Dr. W. B., in 1862, having to remove some small tumours from the head of a lady, prepared to put her under chloroform, and sent for the bottle, meanwhile holding the piece of flannel before her face. He saw, to his surprise, she was going off, and she was soon unconscious, before the chloroform arrived. The doctor removed a tumour, and the dry flannel being taken away, the patient showed signs of returning consciousness. On it being replaced she again went off, and the operation was completed. After some time she awoke, having been completely unconscious all the time.

We conclude with the case¹ of Louise Lateau, a girl of twenty-four, in whom, on September 18, 1874, blood began to issue from the side and from the hands and feet, and from a circle of small spots in the forehead; she being a devout Catholic, and having meditated much on the passion of Jesus. The Royal Academy of Medicine in Belgium had her under observation for five months, determined to find out any fraud, but although her right hand was enclosed in a secure apparatus, her nails closely cut, the bleeding continued without any scratch, and the blood was real. To those acquainted with the power of the mind over the body this extraordinary case is quite credible, without introducing any supernatural cause.

¹ Dr. W. B. Carpenter, who reports this case, says, 'There seems no adequate reason for doubting its genuineness.' And 'to the physiologist who has carefully studied the effect which *concentrated attention* can exert on certain organs (such expectation being peculiarly efficacious when coupled with strong religious emotion), the case presents no difficulty whatever.'

If it be true that faith and fear can both heal, as we have abundantly shown, it can be equally shown that both faith and fear can cause sickness and death with the same certainty. An instance or two will suffice.

A butcher, pale, pulseless, and suffering acute agony, was brought into a chemist's shop. His cries were dreadful, having slipped in hooking a heavy piece of beef, and being suspended by his arm on the sharp hook; and yet, when the arm was exposed, it was uninjured, the hook having only caught in the sleeve.

Dr. Dureaud reports a certainly unjustifiable experiment on a hundred hospital patients, to whom sugar and water was given, and it was afterwards pretended that it was an emetic administered in mistake. No less than eighty out of the hundred became sick.

A gentleman led to believe, by a lie, he had slept in a bed where a man had died of cholera, developed through fear symptoms of the disease, and died.

Fear, and sudden disappointments, especially in the affections, frequently produce a sudden change in the chemical composition of the blood.

A girl in a factory in Yorkshire put a mouse in the bosom of another girl, who was seized with a fit from the fright. Four girls, seeing her in a fit, and believing it to be some catching disease, also had fits; the belief spread, and in four days twenty-four were seized, and the factory had to be closed. A physician was brought from Liverpool, who showed the true

cause of the convulsions, when no more were seized, and the sick got well.

But we have tried our readers' patience enough, and we will now pass on to summarise the evidence before us, and to seek to establish in our closing chapter the true position of faith-healing in the present day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DOGMAS OF FAITH-HEALING.

WE have now perhaps accumulated sufficient material to be able to pass in review the claims of faith-healing in this country, and to come to some conclusion as to their worth. We have considered the doctrine on which it largely rests ; we have reviewed faith-healing historically, and considered its position abroad ; we have studied it in detail in England, and, after most careful examination and prolonged inquiry, have failed to establish a single case of organic cure ; and we have given illustrations of the 'miracle-cures' of the Roman Catholic Church. We then proceeded to show how all these cures at home and abroad, supposed to be miraculous, are paralleled if not surpassed by cures making no such pretensions, or if they do, of such a nature (as, for example, by charms) that they cannot be seriously entertained by us. We have shown how these last-named cures depend solely on the power of the mind over the body, such power, however, in no case, or with excessive rarity, being

produced by effort, but being the result of belief in some external person or object, varying from King Charles II to a bread-pill. Amongst the cures we considered were those effected in America by so-called Christian science with its mind-cures, and there and elsewhere by mesmerism and hypnotism, and similar agencies; and lastly we gave a few selected and striking instances of the power of the mind over the body, in curing by fear instead of faith, and in producing various striking physical phenomena.

Let us then in the light of this varied evidence proceed to consider what may be called the seven leading dogmas or statements of the majority of faith-healers.

1. Any disease can be healed by faith.
2. All disease is the direct result of sin, and comes from the devil.
3. All 'means' are contrary to faith, and unworthy of enlightened Christians.
4. No 'means' whatever are used by faith-healers.
5. Immediate healing can be *claimed* by all Christians, because of Christ's death, and not to claim it is unbelief.
6. The cures are purely miraculous.
7. All who believe they are healed, are healed, though the disease may still exist.

Let us then briefly consider these important points.

1. *Any disease can be healed by faith.* By this we mean that organic disease is equally curable with inorganic by faith alone: and this too not as an abstract proposition, but as an accomplished fact.

Of course, if we accept the teaching to which we alluded at the commencement of these pages, that *Christ bore our sicknesses on the cross*, that is obvious, for no distinction whatever is made in the nature of disease. Moreover, the published cures of faith-healers include such organic diseases as heart-disease, consumption, tumours, cancer, gout, varicose veins, flat-foot, measles, burns, cholera, pleurisy, diphtheria, scarlet fever, corns, &c.

Now, in answer to this, we can only repeat that prolonged investigation and application to leaders in the movement all fail in establishing one single case of the cure of undoubted organic disease; while, on the other hand, inquiry shows that nervous diseases of all sorts are cured in large numbers. In connection with the large number of organic cures freely reported by faith-healers, and as freely testified to by the faith-healed, it must, of course, be understood that no wilful deception is supposed. Nevertheless, the following points should be borne in mind :

(1) That every day skilled physicians are themselves deceived by disease, apparently organic, which is really of nervous origin; and at times needless operations have been performed from a mistaken diagnosis. It is, therefore, extremely likely that in these reported cases the sufferers are themselves mistaken as to the character of their disease, and possibly the medical adviser as well. A large majority of the healed are women, who are peculiarly liable to those distressing nervous diseases that simulate organic disease. Few people have any idea of the caution

required in diagnosing such cases. The want, too, of any clearly-proven case of organic cure is a strong point against such having been effected by faith. The unconscious desire, too, first to make the most of the disease, and then the most of whatever relief is experienced, is a common danger not to be forgotten, and arises from a mistaken idea that God can be glorified by any such exaggerations.

While investigating this matter, I read a most interesting case of such apparent cure in Dr. A. J. Gordon's *Ministry of Healing*. It is a story told by a doctor of the healing of his son, who broke both bones of his forearm. His uncle, a leading Chicago surgeon, put the arm in splints, bandages, and a sling. Next morning, the child begged to have them all removed, but was told he must wear them for six weeks before the arm would be well. 'Why, papa,' he replied, 'it is well!' and then he told his father how he had asked Jesus to make it well, and it was well. The father did not like to chill his faith, and suggested he should ask his uncle. So he went to him and told him, 'Jesus had made his arm well.' The uncle pooh-poohed the idea, and sent him away. The next morning the boy pleaded again he was well, and almost persuaded his father it was so. At last to satisfy him, the uncle took off, very reluctantly, the splints and bandages, and exclaiming, 'It is well, absolutely well!' hastened to the door to keep from fainting.

This story impressed me much, but I felt I could not quote it, as I had not verified it. It is well I did

delay, for I find, from an interesting work on faith-cures by Mr. Gliddon, that it has been investigated by Dr. James Henry Lloyd, of the University of Philadelphia, and the result published in the (*American Medical Record*) for March 27, 1886, in the form of a letter from the very child, who says:

‘DEAR SIR,—The case you cite, when robbed of its sensational surroundings, is as follows: the child was a spoiled youngster, who would have his own way, and when he had a *green stick* fracture (the bones only partly broken) of the forearm, after having had it bandaged for several days, concluded he would much prefer going without a splint. To please the spoiled child, the splint was removed, and the arm *carefully adjusted in a sling*. As a matter of course, the bones united, and being only partially broken, of course all the sooner. This is the miracle. Some nurse, or crank, or religious enthusiast, ignorant of matters physiological and histological, evidently started the story, and unfortunately my name—for I am the party—is being circulated in circles of faith-curites, and is given the sort of notoriety that I do not crave.—CARL H. REED.’

I may add, the date of the second edition of Dr. Gordon’s book that contains the story, but not the reply, is 1886, the year that this letter appeared.

(2) The second proposition is that *All disease is the direct result of sin, and comes from the devil*. One popular writer says, ‘That sickness of yours is the sickness that Jesus bore on the cross.’ ‘There

He bore our sin, and *the consequence of our sin, sickness*, in order to put both away.' 'The proof that sickness is a curse is God's declaration in Scripture.' Now, that sickness, suffering, and death are the result of the entrance of sin into this world all Christians believe ; but that when any Christian is ill it is always the direct result of his sin, and if he remains ill, a proof of want of faith, is a doctrine too obviously untrue to be accepted by sober-minded believers. On this head Mr. Gliddon quotes Dr. W. Moxon, from the *Contemporary Review*, who there says: 'The condemnation of the movement is its cruel confusion of sickness with sin, and of healing with holiness.' He pictures how readily a poor man taught that Christ heals the body as readily as He saves the soul, jumps to the conclusion that if He has not healed his body, He may not have healed his soul! 'It is for this cause,' he adds, 'that what is called "faith-healing" deserves the condemnation of all Christians, as being cruel and heartless, and injurious to the most suffering and pitiful of our fellow-men.' It is when this doctrine is applied to individual cases that its revolting nature is at once apparent. Consider the terrible sufferings of conspicuous servants of God, borne with wondrous patience; the lifelong sufferings of so many earnest saints; the cases of missionaries stricken down with deadly disease, or the cases of district visitors and city missionaries at home, suffering from fevers contracted in their self-denying labours: are their sufferings the result of their sins? Is a broken leg, caused by being run

over by some furious driver, a proof of his sin or of mine? Is typhoid fever, contracted by careless neglect of disinfecting on the part of others, a proof of their sin or mine? Nay,—for faith-healing embraces all sufferings,—are corns, produced by ill-fitting boots, the result of the sin of the maker or of the wearer? and, finally, is the want of the immediate removal of these injuries a proof of my want of faith, and that I have only accepted ‘one half of salvation’?

That God can and does at times use disease and accident as His messengers and as His chastisements is not denied. What we contend against is that suffering necessarily pre-supposes sin. It is most painful to think of the many suffering saints whose sick chambers have been darkened and whose souls have been clouded by this most pernicious teaching. Only the other day I heard of a terrible case of a poor man dying of consumption who was taught that his disease was a proof of his sin and want of faith in Christ; and who with his wife was at last brought confidently to believe he would recover. His death-bed was a most clouded and painful one, blighted by this terrible abuse of God’s Word; and his poor widow was well-nigh made an infidel.

Let me earnestly urge all Christian sufferers to utterly reject such teaching. Health is no more a sign of piety than disease is of sin. Many of God’s brightest saints have been the most suffering. Let them take courage, and remember that God has often been far more glorified in their suffering than in

their health; and that even if it partakes of the nature of discipline it is well for the sufferer to ascertain whether the Divine purpose has been fulfilled in the affliction, ere he ask too earnestly for its removal. In too many cases our sufferings are the direct result of our own ignorance or folly, or that of others, and nothing is more pernicious than to ascribe such cases to the will of God, instead of judging ourselves for the real cause. This much misused phrase is too often made the screen for our own carelessness, which is the real cause of a large proportion of the sufferings we endure. This is of course a sin, but it is not the sin that is generally looked for by faith-healers. That disease and accident are always the result of personal sin is an old error repudiated by our Lord. 'Rabbi,' said His disciples, 'who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, *Neither did this man sin, nor his parents;* but that the works of God should be made manifest in him' (John ix. 2, 3, R.V.). Surely this part of our subject needs no further argument.

(3) The third dogma of faith-healers is that *All 'means' are contrary to faith, and unworthy of enlightened Christians.* This is a strong argument of faith-healers. 'Our healing,' says another writer, 'must be wholly of God.' 'If Christ heals, He must do it alone.' And he compares the combination of 'means' with faith to harnessing a tortoise with a locomotive: they cannot work together. Yet another writer says, 'Before the consecration of the body the Christian has looked . . . to natural means for

his recovery.' One already quoted certainly admits that asking God's blessing on the use of remedies may be 'faith-healing'; but 'the faith is in the remedies more than in God; it is not Divine healing, in which the faith is solely and entirely in God.' Remedies are said to be for 'the Egyptians,' and the 'spiritual Israel should have nothing to do with these things.'

Now here again we have teaching that is widespread in its evil effects. By limiting trust in God for healing to those who exclude means, such teachers shut out the bulk of their fellow-Christians, who believe as truly as they do in Divine healing, but not that it is necessarily or usually miraculous. They seem to forget that it is God Himself who has provided all the remedies we now use for the body.

There are confessedly three possible modes of cure: by the use of remedies that act directly on the body; by those that act on the body through the mind; and by miracles. Now all these three are equally given by God, and to admit the third, to deny the other two, is wrong. Bengel says of the oil mentioned in the Epistle of St. James that it is only a sign; but others think that it, and the action of the Good Samaritan, and of the disciples in Mark vi. 13, represent that use of means that was common in that day. The positive refusal of medical and surgical aid is nothing less than a sin, inasmuch as it is a rejection of two of the most useful agencies allowed by God to man. We maintain that the cure of any case committed to God in prayer is equally from God, whether it be wrought by drugs,

by the mind, or by miracle. The latter mode is the most flattering to our pride, and it enables those who presume they have been so cured to stand on a pinnacle of superior faith.

To look on 'means' as sin and want of faith leads to most terrible bondage. A lady wrote to me the other day, saying she had been taught this doctrine to such an extent that, having very painful corns or bunions, she was positively afraid to use the simple remedies at hand, as it would be a want of faith. She told me a sort of spell had been cast over her, which she longed to shake off; and wished to know if it would be really wrong to use simple remedies that would give instant relief. It is not so much the assertion that God may heal without means in answer to the prayer of faith that is objected to, as the setting of one class of healing against the other, and one class of Christians against another, that we so much deplore. We close this section with an extract from Mr. Gliddon's book:—

'I believe that a fuller recognition should be given to the fact that the Divine Healer is constantly healing through the operation of the forces which He has impressed upon Nature, and in complete harmony with what is known as natural law. Just as He answers our prayer for daily bread through natural channels, so He answers our prayers for bodily healing through the same media.

'The other day my little daughter Katie was at the point of death. She was suffering from meningitis (inflammation of the brain). Notwithstanding the use,

under a physician's direction, of medicines, wet packs, &c., the fever continued to be dangerously high. We prayed for her recovery. A highly-successful hydro-pathic practitioner, Mrs. —, of Southport, came in just as the feet and legs had turned cold as marble. In a few minutes more the child must have died ; but the adoption of extremely vigorous measures—including the plunging of the lower limbs into almost boiling water and mustard—restored the circulation and saved the life. Did not God hear my prayer for my child's restoration? I believe He did. Was not this a case of Divine healing? I believe it was. God gave the restorative power to the remedies. He sent Mrs. — to my house just when she was needed to apply them, and He gave her the wisdom to select the right remedies, and to use them in the right way. And I thanked Him just as much for my daughter's recovery as if He had raised her out of bed without using any human agents or any material remedies. Indeed, I am disposed to thank Him more for healing in the former way than if He had used the latter method. For He has given me a reason for being extremely grateful, not only to Him, the Supreme Benefactor, but also to her whom He used as His agent. And He has also given me cause to praise the mercy which has placed such effective remedial substances, not only in the homes of Christians, but also in those of unbelievers, and so made it possible for the disobedient as well as for the faithful to obtain relief in the day of suffering, and deliverance in the hour of peril.'

(4) A fourth statement is to the effect that *No means whatever are used by faith-healers*. Inside the cover of *Thy Healer*, a leading faith-healing periodical, it is said, 'The whole of the work at——is that souls and bodies should be brought into contact with Jesus Himself. *No means whatever are resorted to.*' It is absolutely taught that those who trust the Great Physician for bodily healing are showing a great 'want of courtesy' (*sic*) if they have recourse to any earthly remedies.

We have already pointed out that earthly remedies are of two descriptions,—those that act directly on the body, and those (of which we have given so many instances) that act upon the body through the mind; and we maintain that *both* these classes of remedies are largely used by faith-healers.

At Männedorf, in Switzerland, the patients themselves clearly recognised the powerful curative influences at work, in the rest from household cares, the quiet, the pure invigorating air, the plain but substantial character of the meals, the regularity of the hours for rising and retiring, and the amount of exercise used, apart from any question of faith whatever. These are well-known and most powerful bodily remedies, and indeed only require some good tonic medicine added to them to be in themselves all that a physician could ask for to cure most nervous diseases, and to restore those who had had organic disease rapidly to health.

But these are not, by any means, all the means used at faith-healing establishments, whether in

England or abroad. The whole battery of mental remedies is also brought to bear upon the patient in the most powerful way. The leaders at these places are generally men who anywhere would inspire confidence and induce belief; the act of faith is itself curative, and the expectation of hope health-giving. The powerful mental influence of cheerful Christian society, of the expectation of cure, supported by numerous Bible-readings, and meetings where the certainty of faith-healing is the one theme, are all brought strongly to bear upon the patient. In some of the more energetic centres the influences of the final meeting, where the patient is anointed for immediate healing, are still more powerful. Such a scene is thus described by an eye-witness :

‘Never shall I forget the intense excitement which was created at one of Major P—’s (referred to on page 52) meetings while he and several helpers from a faith-home stood around a patient and anointed him in the name of the Lord; they loudly shouted together, “He is healed! he is healed! I believe it! I believe it!” and they strove to induce the afflicted one to join in the shout, and to say “I am healed! I believe it!”’

By thus working up a nervous sufferer into a state of intense mental excitement, and suggesting cure, and inducing him to act and speak as if he was cured, these faith-healers are adopting, perhaps unconsciously, the most powerful mental remedies known.

(5) The fifth proposition is, that *immediate healing*

can be claimed by all Christians, because of Christ's death, and that not to claim it is unbelief. It must at once be said that a large section of faith-healers entirely repudiate this statement. At Männedorf, for instance, we have already pointed out (p. 26) what a simple childlike waiting on the Father's will prevails; so entirely contrary to the apparently arrogant and dictatorial spirit often found elsewhere. Surely such presumption as is embodied in the above statement stands self-condemned. Flattering indeed it is to that most deadly of all forms of pride—spiritual pride—to be able to command Divine power at will; but the attitude of the Christian is surely rather that so beautifully described by Herr Zeller. The deliberate expectation of an instant miracle, and the well-nigh dictation of the desired act of power to the Almighty God, is a presumptuous folly often severely rebuked, which arises from a twofold ignorance; first, of the value of disease and suffering in the school of God; and, secondly, of the simple way in which He is generally, in His providence, pleased to answer believing prayer by purely natural means.

(6) The next statement to discuss is that *the cures are purely miraculous.* That this is firmly believed by faith-healers is evident from their language. Healing is declared to be a gift of God's free grace, received by personal faith in Christ, just as redemption. It is wholly of God. Before the 'truth' is seen, natural means are looked to for recovery. The 'gift of healing' is believed to be possessed by many. Now, while no one who believes in God can for

a moment limit His omnipotence, nothing is more foolish or more disastrous to the cause of truth than to present as miraculous cures those that are afterwards proved to be wrought by natural means.

We have as yet too imperfect ideas of the natural, and where its powers end, and as to what line divides it from the supernatural, to wish to dogmatize on the subject. The limits of the possible power of mind over body have as yet by no means been reached, and it is well therefore to adopt as a golden rule 'never to suppose a miracle where natural causes can effect the result.' This in no way limits the power or value of prayer; and nothing is more pernicious than to suppose that prayer is only availing when it brings miraculous answers. That God can and does bless and use natural means in answer to prayer is surely enough to know.

This belief in cures in answer to prayer being wrought without natural means, and miraculously, was common amongst the early Christians. In the Catacombs of Rome amulets have been found inscribed with the word *ἰχθύς*, a fish (the five letters being the Greek initials of Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour), by which, some say, miraculous cures were supposed to be effected. When, however, we find that cures similar in character have been efficiently performed, not only by the use of such charms, but by such divers means as relics, mesmerism, spiritualism, hypnotism, make-believe remedies, suggestion, fear, volition, emotion; and by such ungodly or unorthodox people as witches, notoriously

bad kings and men, and by Mormons, Shakers, Peculiar People, by Irvingites, Roman Catholics, Christian Scientists, and others, we must see that these cures, however marvellous at first sight, must be capable on further examination of a natural explanation, which after all is the true one.

Nothing is more degrading to Christianity and to the miracles of our Lord than to suppose such a case as the following, just placed in our hands, to be miraculous. It is headed: *A Testimony for Jesus*.

‘On Monday, November 14, 1887, as I was going out, I fell down the steps and broke my leg. I was carried in, suffering great pain. My one desire was for grace to bear the pain, so that Jesus would be glorified before all. Many persons came to see me, and wished me to have a doctor. I said I would have none but Jesus, and sent for Brother C—— to “anoint me with oil in the name of the Lord.”

‘I then got perfect peace, praise God. On Wednesday a friend sent a doctor; he told me my leg was broken badly: it was a compound fracture of the ankle-bone. He was very kind, and offered to set it for me; but I refused his aid, and told him the Lord Jesus Christ was my “Great Physician,” I would trust Him to heal me. The doctor then said if I did not have it set I should never walk again. I then sang, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” He prayed with me, and again said, “If you don’t have it set it will be too late”; but, praise the Lord, I trusted, the bones knit together, and I gradually felt better. My Jesus told me to “stand still and see the salvation

of God" in the healing of broken bones. Many suggested the use of crutches to help me until I had power to walk, but, praise God, on Friday, January 13, 1888, the Lord told me to "arise and walk." I arose and walked round the room, and ran down the stairs into the dining-room, praising God. I told those present what God had wrought. We all sang praises. I then ran upstairs, blessing and praising God for His healing power.

‘S. F. C——.’

In this case the ‘standing still to see the salvation of God’ resulted in the rather tame achievement of being able to walk two months after the accident, and there can be no doubt that, if the patient had used the means the Christian doctor proposed, the result would have been still more satisfactory. There is, however, obviously a desire to exalt this somewhat tedious recovery to the level of a New Testament miracle; and we repeat, such attempts do nothing but harm, and are very far from being any help to the cause of Christ.

(7) The last proposition is that *all who believe they are healed, are healed; though the disease may still exist*. This statement seems so unreasonable, that had I not met with a case where it was acted on, I could hardly believe it. ‘I hold,’ says one writer, ‘that all who come to God for healing, and accept it by faith in His appointed way, are healed, no matter what may be the evidence of their senses to the contrary.’ ‘We must take God’s purpose to do a thing as God’s fact.’ Again, to the question, ‘Is it

right to testify to healing when you are yet diseased?' the answer was, 'Yes, if you have fulfilled the condition, and can rest surely on God's word, as Abraham did.' Mr. Gliddon quotes still stronger statements. At a meeting a lady testified, 'I have been ignoring my deafness for the last two years, and it still stays on.' 'Three weeks ago,' said another, 'I was so ill I could hardly get to —, and was anointed, and the Lord healed me, though for some days after I was worse. My husband said, "You are no better." I said, "No, I feel worse than ever, but the Lord has healed me."' Another said, 'I am healed by faith, but not by my senses. . . . I do not exactly like this way of speaking myself, but the leaders tell us we must say so.' A friend of mine, a Christian doctor, found a woman who had been to —, from whom he had to remove a cancer, actually protesting at the time she was healed. How shall we characterize teaching such as this? What must be its effects on those who receive it? And what light does it cast upon the value of other testimony, which is thus connected with a doctrine that allows things that are not, to be spoken of as though they were?

We have now completed our brief inquiry into faith-healing as developed in our midst in the present day. We are aware that great exception may be taken to what we have considered to be the seven leading points in the teaching of faith-healers, for they not only differ from others, but differ greatly among themselves; nevertheless, we think that these points

which we have selected fairly represent the special claims of the system as a whole. It is to be feared also that the feelings of many devout children of God may be pained by any doubt being cast upon the reality of Divine miraculous interposition in the case of their cures ; but still we believe this inquiry, which has by no means been lightly undertaken, is justified in the cause of truth and Christianity.

It is freely conceded that God can as He pleases interfere in the material world, and can certainly, now as ever, cure miraculously. It is also freely conceded that many cases of sudden cure, as those of children and unbelievers, in answer to prayer, by their very nature exclude the great therapeutic power of mind and body, and render it possible that God *may have* here directly intervened. This is, however, the very furthest limit to which the sober Christian would go.

In these and other cases of apparent organic cure, it may be our ignorance that prevents us discerning the natural cause God has been pleased to use ; and in every case any assumption that cannot be proved should be carefully avoided. Even when we know natural means have been at work, it is frequently impossible to define the exact mode of cure. I am convinced that, could we for a moment get a real sight of our own stupendous ignorance in all matters of life and disease, we should be amazed at the frequent arrogance of the language and assumption that is indulged in by Christians. Such assumptions can only lead to the degradation of true miracles.

To promise present cure, and brand the failure to

obtain it as unbelief, is a shocking cruelty, which cannot be too strongly opposed ; and the recoil of the shattered faith in which it often results is painful to contemplate. Besides, it altogether takes the creature out of his place. It is good to feel our limitations, and patiently to bear our infirmities, to feel the advance of age and the approach of death ; and better to cultivate a spirit of filial submission than to talk of claiming and demanding immediate cures.

Lastly, it would appear that faith-healers, in practically excluding God from acting through natural methods, deny at once the greater part of His dealings ; for a calm consideration of the evidence here adduced, as well as the conspicuous absence of other evidence as carefully sought for, both tend to show that the hidden power that is used to cure disease, in at any rate nine-tenths of the cases, is the little understood effect of the mind over the body, and that this is the means through which the prayer of faith gets its most frequent answer. We will not, however, be debarred by faith-healers from giving the same glory to God (who made both mind and body) because it is so, as if He had wrought a special miracle on our behalf.

While therefore utterly repudiating the leading doctrines of faith-healers, we believe that *God now as ever answers believing prayer when and how He wills, but that, as far as we have been able to discern, He is usually pleased to work through purely natural means.*

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